CAN CATHOLICS SAVE CATHOLICISM?
ALAN WOLFE

SEPTEMBER 11, STILL
LEON WIESELTIER

THE NEW REPUBLIC
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THE OPERATOR
How George Tenet Undermined the CIA
SPENCER ACKERMAN AND JOHN B. JUDIS

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ACTIONS AND ARRESTS

There is no question that the international community has been engaged in a fierce war with a shadow enemy since September 2001. Nations around the world recognize the responsibility not only to protect their own citizens from the threat of terrorism, but to protect the citizens of other countries as well. Every government has had to take a stand in the fight against evil. Often, the truth is hard to determine because terrorists hide behind so many flags.

As part of a public debate in the United States, Saudi Arabia has come under much scrutiny. While our leaders have clearly stated our position and denounced terrorism at every turn, we recognize that we will ultimately be judged not by our words, but by our deeds.

Since September 2001, Saudi Arabia has arrested more than 500 individuals with suspected ties to terrorism. Over the course of these arrests, Saudi security officers also seized large quantities of high explosives, automatic rifles, rocket launchers, tons of bomb-making materials and devices, false identity cards and documents, and large amounts of cash. Many security officers have been killed or injured in recent counter-terror activities.

Many of these actions and arrests have been highlighted in the world press, including:

• Yousif Salih Fahad Al-Ayeeri, a.k.a. Swift Sword, a major Al-Qaeda operational planner and fundraiser who was killed on May 31 while fleeing from a security patrol.

• Ali Abdulrahman Said Alfagsi Al-Ghamdi, a.k.a. Abu Bakr Al-Azdi, who surrendered to Saudi authorities. Al-Ghamdi, considered one of the top Al-Qaeda operatives in Saudi Arabia, is suspected of being one of the masterminds of the May 12 bombings in Riyadh.

• Turki Nasser Mishaal Aldandany, another top Al-Qaeda operative and mastermind of the May 12 bombings, who was killed on July 3, along with three other suspects in a gun battle with security forces that had them surrounded.

• The Ministry of Interior announced on July 21 that Saudi authorities had defused terrorist operations which were about to be carried out against vital installations and arrested 16 members of a number of terrorist cells after searching their hideouts in farms and houses in Riyadh Province, Qasim Province and the Eastern Province.

• Three men were arrested at a checkpoint in Al-Ka'akia district of Makkah on July 25 for possessing printed material that included a "religious edict" in support of terrorist acts against Western targets.

• Saudi security forces on July 28 killed six terrorist suspects and injured one more in a gunfight at a farm in Qasim Province, 220 miles north of the capital, Riyadh. Two Saudi security officers were killed and eight suffered minor injuries. Four people who harbored the suspects were arrested.

• Three clerics, Ali Fahd Al-Khudair, Ahmed Hamoud Mufreh Al-Khaledi and Nasir Ahmed Al-Fuhaid, were arrested after calling for support of the terrorists who carried out the Riyadh attacks.

As the War on Terrorism wages on, Saudi Arabia remains committed to rooting out and bringing to justice those who perpetrate such heinous acts.

"I vow to my fellow citizens, and to the friends who reside among us, that the State will be vigilant about their security and well-being. Our nation is capable, by the Grace of God Almighty and the unity of its citizens, to confront and destroy the threat posed by a deviant few and those who endorse or support them. With the help of God Almighty, we shall prevail."

Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz,
May 13, 2003

"After the terrible attacks in Riyadh on May the 12th, the government of Saudi Arabia has intensified its longstanding efforts against the Al-Qaeda network...America and Saudi Arabia face a common terrorist threat, and we appreciate the strong, continuing efforts of the Saudi government in fighting that threat."

President George W. Bush,
July 1, 2003

THE PEOPLE OF SAUDI ARABIA
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THE NEW REPUBLIC
A JOURNAL OF POLITICS AND THE ARTS

SEPTEMBER 22, 2003 WASHINGTON, D.C. ISSUE 4,627 VOLUME 229

COVER STORY

Spencer Ackerman and John B. Judis **18** **The Operator** In his seven years as director of the CIA, George Tenet has upped the agency's profile and made it a key player in the war on terrorism. Unfortunately, he has done this in part by telling Congress and the president what they wanted to hear—whether it was true or not.

POLITICS & THE WORLD

4 **CORRESPONDENCE** The readers' case for Howard Dean, &c.

Jonathan Chait **6** **TRB | General Election** Wesley Clark, Democratic messiah.

The Editors **9** **Getting Real** The setbacks in Iraq and Palestine are real, but not refutations of American policy.

10 **NOTEBOOK** How Laura Bush could really help teachers, &c.

Ryan Lizza **12** **Campaign Journal: Candid Camera** At the Baltimore debate, Kerry fades from the picture, Dean upstages Lieberman, and Graham auditions for a new role.

Jason Zengerle **13** **Montgomery Dispatch: Not a Prayer** In Alabama, a Christian plea for tax reform falls on deaf ears.

Joshua Hammer **15** **Jerusalem Dispatch: Roadblock** The Bush administration used quiet diplomacy to push the Israeli-Palestinian road map. The result? A loud failure.

Leon Wieseltier **46** **WASHINGTON DIARIST | Still**

BOOKS & THE ARTS

Stanley Kauffmann **30** **FILMS | The Past, Returning** *Taking Sides,* on the life of the conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler, makes a worthy attempt at adapting a mediocre play.

Richard A. Posner **31** **The End Is Near** *Oryx and Crake* by Margaret Atwood

Hayyim Nahman Bialik **34** **POEM** | *My Place Is With You* translated by Leon Wieseltier

Alan Wolfe **36** **Cross Purposes** *A People Adrift: The Crisis of the Roman Catholic Church in America* by Peter Steinfels

Michael B. Oren **42** **Road Maps** *Support Any Friend: Kennedy's Middle East and the Making of the U.S.-Israel Alliance* by Warren Bass

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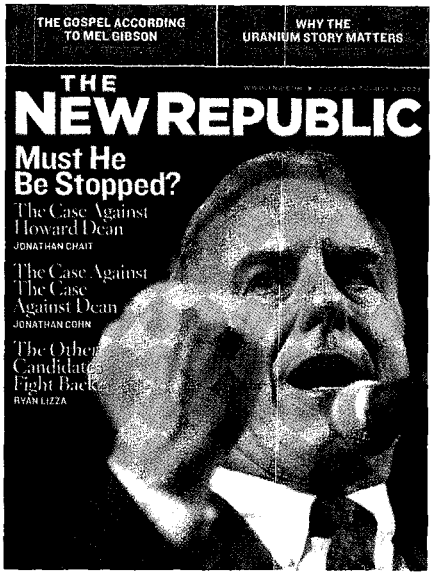
CORRESPONDENCE

MAN OF THE HOUR

JONATHAN CHAIT'S HYSTERICAL condemnation of Howard Dean goes wrong on many points, but, on one, he inadvertently demonstrates why Dean may just be the right man at the right time ("Bitter Pill," July 28 & August 4). He claims that Dean has gotten away with mischaracterizing the Beltway Democrats as "Bush Lite" only because they can't get any media attention in the face of the Republican power monolith. Even if we concede that point, it only begs another question: Why haven't the Beltway Dems been able to refute Dean's charges? Chait certainly can't complain that Dean has any unfair advantage; indeed, until a few months ago, he was the underdog in terms of both money and media attention. If Joe Lieberman, John Edwards, John Kerry, and Dick Gephardt can't effectively communicate what they stand for now, in this relatively soft, issue-oriented environment, what makes Chait believe they can do so in the face of the conservative media juggernaut that will engulf them next year?

No, Dean isn't perfect. But he's a far greater political talent than any of the others in the field right now. And talent—along with personality, passion, and courage—is an absolute prerequisite for getting elected, far more important than particular stands on particular issues. None of the other Democrats can match Dean on this score.

DAN PERRETEN
Seattle, Washington


THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MEL GIBSON
WHY THE URANIUM STORY MATTERS
THE NEW REPUBLIC
Must He Be Stopped?
The Case Against Howard Dean
JONATHAN CHAIT
The Case Against The Case Against Dean
JONATHAN COHN
The Other Candidates Fight Back
RYAN LIZZA

CHAIT MAKES SOME VALID POINTS about the uphill battle Dean faces in trying to unseat George W. Bush. It will be tricky for Dean to reach out to moderate swing voters while at the same time maintaining the enthusiasm of his anti-war supporters. What Chait doesn't say is why this trick would be easier for any of the other Democrats. No other Democrat has inspired more enthusiasm from independents or indeed from any group of voters. Chait argues that Dean appeals to a narrow elite, noting that he has less than 50 percent approval from New Hampshire voters without college degrees. That's silly; how many of those voters had even heard of Dean? I'm an "educated, elite" voter, I suppose, but I couldn't name the governor (let alone the ex-governor) of Oregon or Idaho. If Dean is nominated, the people will find out about him, and then they can decide for themselves if they like him.

Certainly it is bizarre for Chait to compare Dean's candidacy to that of Steve Forbes. The contrast is stark: Forbes began his run with lots of money and sterling press notices, only to fail dismally because his owl-like demeanor failed to connect with audiences. Dean started with no money, but he has

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steadily moved toward the top of the Democratic heap. Why? Because, when people listen to him, the message and the messenger both appeal. And, if Dean is Karl Rove's favorite candidate, fine: Bring him on board, too.

DON ROGERS
Seattle, Washington

WE ARE VERY LUCKY TO HAVE someone like Howard Dean to step up to the plate just when we need him. President Bush has no defense against Dean. Bush can't say that Dean voted for the big tax cut, which has contributed to the outrageous $455 billion deficit. He can't say that Dean voted for the costly and poorly planned war in Iraq, which was based on shoddy intelligence. Dean has stayed strong, with a positive message. This helps Dean deflect the administration's attempts to shirk responsibilities for disasters of its own making, and it positions him very well for the general election.

PETER KERR
College Park, Maryland

COURT RECESS

JOEL MOWBRAY'S ARTICLE ON THE State Department's intervention in a trial brought by some of the victims of Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe seems to bark up the wrong tree ("Mistrial," July 28 & August 4). Yes, the U.S. government's spinelessness in dealing with Mugabe should be well-publicized. But to think that litigation is the best venue to right the wrongs of overseas dictators or to redress the injuries of victims of brutal dictators is shortsighted. People here and, more importantly, people abroad who need to join us in condemnation and sanction against brutal dictators are going to see yet another example of America's out-of-control litigious society running amok and ascribe to the important issues behind the litigation a level of skepticism that can injure a just cause. And, as Mowbray himself acknowledges, we run the risk that activists everywhere will use similar tools against our leaders. It doesn't matter whether we have laws that protect our officials against foreign suits; the political damage from news reports about our officials' shielded status will cause the intended damage to America's image that the foreign lawsuits set out to accomplish in the first place. The real emphasis should be placed on political action to swing U.S. policy against foreign dictators in a robust way. For instance, pressure should be brought to bear on the U.S. Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), which has been conspicuously silent on the Mugabe situation. Victims should be clamoring for CBC-sponsored congressional hearings on the situation in Zimbabwe. Likewise, lobbying groups like TransAfrica Forum should be pressured to take up this fight. Publicity generated through these venues would help to stiffen the U.S. government's spine in dealing with other African leaders who can apply pressure on Mugabe, such as South African President Thabo Mbeki. Political pressure, rather than a limited, litigious approach, will help to discredit dictators like Mugabe in Africa and at international forums like the United Nations.

JOHN HUMMER
Brooklyn, New York

LEFT OUT

PETER BEINART IS CORRECT IN HIS assessment of International ANSWER's (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism) ideological approach to organizing political protests, but I take issue with his overall characterization of the left and its response to African crises ("No Answer," July 21). Many people who are on the liberal left care deeply about Africa and want to see the United States take a leading role in putting an end to the suffering that plagues most of the continent. A simple search on *The Nation*'s website turns up 15 articles on Africa since 2001. *In These Times* ran five articles on Africa in 2003 alone. And many writers, such as George Packer, Samantha Power, and Salih Booker, have recently written about Africa for *Mother Jones*, *The New Yorker*, and TomPaine.com, all of which are decidedly liberal publications. Writers like Cornel West, Noam Chomsky, and Howard Zinn, whom Beinart describes as "leaders of the global left," do not set the agenda for everyone on the left. The fact that the West-Chomsky-Zinn camp hasn't written about Africa doesn't mean the entire left is not paying attention to what's happening there.

Using a small group like ANSWER as a means to discredit the entire left is no better than using the Christian Coalition to discredit the entire right. Most people on the left recognize ANSWER for the charlatans that they are.

HEATH MADOM
Port Jefferson, New York

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General Election

TRB
FROM WASHINGTON

THERE IS A certain kind of voter who, perpetually discontented with the available candidates, projects his hopes onto some white knight. Inevitably, the prospective hoped-for savior declines to run (Mario Cuomo, Colin Powell) or, worse still, runs but turns out to be a loon (Ross Perot). General Wesley Clark, who appears all but certain to enter the Democratic primary, is the latest to attract the hopes of white-knight enthusiasts. Count me in.

I admit to having indulged in this sort of unrequited longing before. (I'm still waiting, Senator McCain.) I also admit that, if history repeats itself, Clark will flame out in the early primaries, reveal himself as an unstable whack job, or, perhaps, both. But history won't repeat itself this time. I swear.

Clark seems like the creation of a Democratic strategist's fantasy: an articulate Rhodes scholar who hails from the South (Arkansas, no less). Even better, he has a too-good-to-be-true religious trifecta: He was raised Southern Baptist, converted to his wife's Catholicism, and discovered his father was Jewish. Oh, and he won a Silver Star and a Purple Heart during the Vietnam War.

Clark's main selling point is his gig as supreme allied NATO commander during the 1990s. To understand why this makes him an ideal Democratic nominee, consider President Bush's political strengths and weaknesses. His popularity does not derive from his policies. Indeed, the public has consistently opposed his domestic priorities—on everything from taxes to health care. Under normal political conditions, a Democratic candidate should be favored. However, we do not live under normal political conditions. The Clinton scandals produced a cultural backlash, which in 2000 allowed Bush to compensate for the unpopularity of his platform by coming across as a decent, regular guy while portraying his opponent as untrustworthy, aloof, and culturally alien. More important, the September 11 attacks drastically altered the political landscape: The perception that Republicans are stronger on national security than Democrats, until recently a marginal factor in elections, is now a threshold issue.

These strands have melded together, giving Bush the image of a tough, clear-eyed leader who isn't afraid to see the world in the stark terms of good versus evil. His reelection strategy will be to paint his opponent as a soft moral equivocator—somebody who you can't picture landing on an aircraft carrier or smoking the bad guys out of their holes. The bad news is that this strategy will probably succeed. The good news is that, if it doesn't, Bush will almost certainly lose, given his unpopular policy positions.

That's why Clark's prospective candidacy—which may be official by the time you read this—comes to the Democratic Party like manna from heaven. The notion of a general as a slippery prevaricator is so counterintuitive that it would be unlikely to take root with anybody but die-hard GOP partisans. And, needless to say, Clark easily passes the can-you-picture-him-as-commander-in-chief test.

Clark skeptics have three main objections. The first is that Democrats could just as easily inoculate themselves on defense by nominating John Kerry, another veteran. The analogy is absurd. Even if he *could* equal Clark's military credentials, Kerry's profile as an aloof, wealthy liberal who once served as Michael Dukakis's lieutenant governor would make him a sitting duck against Bush's pseudo-populist shtick. Anyway, Kerry *can't* match Clark's military standing. Kerry's stint in Vietnam took place more than 30 years ago. The evermore desperate ways in which he's forced to remind people of his service are a "Saturday Night Live" skit waiting to happen. (*Don't you dare question my position on indexing federal employee pensions! I saw federal employees die in the rice paddies of Vietnam!*) Clark, on the other hand, wouldn't need to remind people of his military biography because it's intrinsic to his identity. His first name is "General."

Second, some argue that Clark can't expect the kind of reception that greeted Dwight D. Eisenhower when he ran for president in 1952 because Clark's leadership of NATO forces in Kosovo was nowhere near as prominent as Eisenhower's leadership of the Allies in World War II. "Comparisons of Clark to Dwight Eisenhower are ludicrous," sniffed George F. Will. "While few people outside politics have heard of Clark," observed *The Weekly Standard*, "Eisenhower was one of the most popular figures in American history." While true, this misses the point. Clark doesn't need to be an icon of American heroism. His military post is simply a way to negate Bush's political strengths. Its political value is defensive, not offensive.

Objection number three is that Clark lacks political experience. Also true. But the skills you need to run a successful campaign are all things Clark has already shown he can do: schmooze with fundraisers, inspire loyalty among a staff, and get a message across effectively both in person and on television. It's the latter talent—on frequent display during his stint as a CNN commentator during the Iraq war and in interviews since—that has some people so excited about Clark. While his publicly expressed positions on the issues—abortion, gun control, taxes—and his nuanced criticism of Bush's Iraq strategy are all mainstream Democratic fare, Clark articulates them better than most professional politicians. Sure, Clark would be slightly more likely than, say, Dick Gephardt to make a rookie gaffe. But Clark's prospects for beating Bush are so much higher than anybody else's that a small risk is necessary.

Can Clark win? It's more likely than the pundits think. Clark has grassroots enthusiasm, with more online supporters at Meetup.com than any candidate besides Howard Dean. A staffer for one Democratic leader told me there's a ton of political talent just dying to join his campaign. *The Wall Street Journal* reported not long ago that Democratic National Committee Chairman Terry McAuliffe's doorman implored him to enlist Clark. The importance of that anecdote lies not in its substance but its source; who do you suppose leaked that story to the *Journal*? (Hint: not the doorman.) And, of course, there's the fact that it's manifestly in the Democrats' interest to nominate Clark. Democrats being Democrats, that doesn't mean they will. But it must count for *something*, right? **JONATHAN CHAIT**

Peter Beinart is out of the country. He will resume writing TRB next week.

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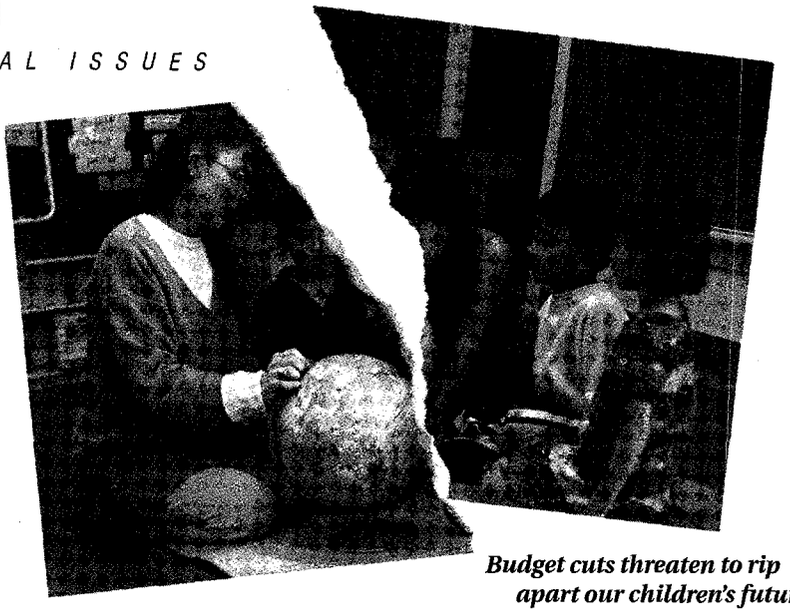
Where We Stand

THE **AFT** ON CRITICAL ISSUES

WILL OUR LEADERS PASS THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL TEST?

Elected officials have to provide the support to keep education reforms working.



Budget cuts threaten to rip apart our children's futures

You don't have to look far to find public schools where commonsense education reforms like class size reduction, proven reading programs, and higher standards are leading to increased achievement for students. But it's even easier to see that many successful education programs are now seriously threatened by the fiscal crisis gripping the nation and by the failure of many elected officials to stand strong for these reforms.

Across the country, a collision course has been set in motion. State education budgets are being squeezed ever tighter, jeopardizing reforms that are already making a difference. At the same time, school districts are striving to raise standards and to comply with the demands of the federal No Child Left Behind law. But neither the president nor the congressional majority has matched the worthwhile requirements of this important legislation with the federal support necessary for schools and students to achieve its goals.

Standing up for what's right

Some state leaders, determined to keep their states' schools on track, have taken a principled stand against shortsighted cuts to education.

North Carolina Gov. Mike Easley, for example, has supported education despite lean times. While other states have been laying off teachers and trimming or eliminating education programs, North Carolina expanded prekindergarten, added more grades to its class size reduction program, increased teacher salaries, and worked to keep higher education affordable.

Gov. Easley rightly calls these investments "a clear signal to the business community that North Carolina is going to graduate some sharp people." What's more, he adds, "with other states cutting education, it gives us a chance to make rapid improvement in relative terms."

And in Mississippi, despite a very tight budget, Gov. Ronnie Musgrove has pledged that the funding formula for state schools "will get all the money it needs" while he is in office.

Gov. Musgrove knows that Mississippi's future requires an unwavering commitment to education. As he questioned, "Will our children have to leave our state to find jobs?" Fixing local schools, he said, "is our chance to improve quality of life." Maintaining—and increasing—education resources is not easy during these times, but these state leaders, among others, understand that such wise investments will have significant and lasting benefits.

Education spending should focus on what works. Citizens need to know that their leaders are providing the funding necessary for successful education reforms to keep making a difference. Many officials have allowed a bad situation to get even worse by avoiding tough decisions and abandoning investments in education. That's the wrong choice to make.

Sandra Feldman, President, American Federation of Teachers

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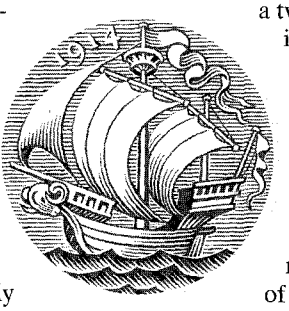
Getting Real

FOR MONTHS, THE Bush administration imposed its will on the Middle East, and now the Middle East is imposing its will on the Bush administration. It is a season of realism. The satisfactions of high ideas have given way to the exasperations of low problems. Neither Iraq nor Palestine has responded to American action, military and political, as the administration expected it to respond. Instead of adoring American soldiers, Iraqis are killing them; and the Shia are collapsing into an internecine war and the politics of the mob; and the infrastructure of the country remains a ruin; and Saddam Hussein is still at large; and the costs of the greatest American enterprise abroad since the end of the cold war are swelling grotesquely. In Palestine, meanwhile, the political obituary of Yasir Arafat that was written in Washington a few months ago turns out to have been premature.

And so the president has wisely lost a little interest in the more idiosyncratic theologies of the Pentagon, and turned to a more sober analysis of what the conditions of American success in the Middle East really are.

Those conditions were always clear to supporters of the war who were not inclined to the ideologically fevered case for it. The incredible complexity of Iraq and the undemocratic habits of its pent-up population, secular and religious; the dire need for more American troops on the ground, where cruise missiles can no longer accomplish anything, and the streets are not safe, and the border with Iran is open and teeming with mischief; the unlikelihood that Iraq could pay for its own emancipation, at least in the short term: All this should not have come as news. Too many of the absolutely perfect people in the Bush administration appear to have forgotten the difference between a fantasy and a plan. But all this makes President Bush's speech of September 7 oddly more admirable. Unlike his predecessor, Bush chose not to cut and run when the casualties and the complications arrived.

Indeed, Bush's decision to stake his presidency on the outcome of the war in Iraq may be said to represent the de-Somaliazation of American security policy. By asking for more money and more support (it is just a matter of time before he asks for more troops), the president made it clear that the United States will not be hounded out of its philosophical and strategic priorities. This is exactly as it should be. The recriminations must not go too far. There have been mistakes in the war in Iraq, but the war in Iraq is not itself a mistake. Nothing that Americans have so far done in Iraq, and nothing that has so far been done in Iraq to Americans, warrants a reexamination of our reasons for being there. Those reasons are still good.



The same may be said of the administration's policy in Palestine. Its principles are sound. No Israeli government can responsibly negotiate a peace while Israelis are wantonly murdered in their streets; and since Yasir Arafat represents the cynical support of such murders as an instrument of Palestinian politics, no Israeli government can responsibly negotiate a peace with Yasir Arafat. As long as Arafat controls Palestinian politics, Hamas and Islamic Jihad are in no danger of delegitimation or destruction. It would be a blunder to expel Arafat from Palestine, as the Sharon government is itching to do, but only a tactical blunder: As long as the rule of Arafat represents the perpetuation of the sanguinary status quo in Palestine, it represents the most significant obstacle to peace. The blame for the failure of the administration's "road map" certainly falls on all the parties, but the Bush administration was right to think that it could not abandon the Israelis and the Palestinians to their savage lot, and right to think that the reform of Palestinian politics is the only meaningful proof of Palestinian willingness to accept a two-state solution and to implement it with a sense of historical seriousness.

The setbacks in Iraq and in Palestine may be discouraging for the Bush administration, but they are not dishonorable. And realism must not become a form of complicity with reality, a fancy doctrine of complacence. Quite the contrary. Realism is the solemn duty of idealists, who are charged with the implementation of their ideals. If democracy will be brought to Iraq, and if peace will be brought to Israel and Palestine, then all the blood and the treasure and the prestige that America has brought to the task will have been justified. ■

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NOTEBOOK

LAURA BUSH, TEACHER'S PET ... DONALD RUMSFELD, BUSY BEAVER

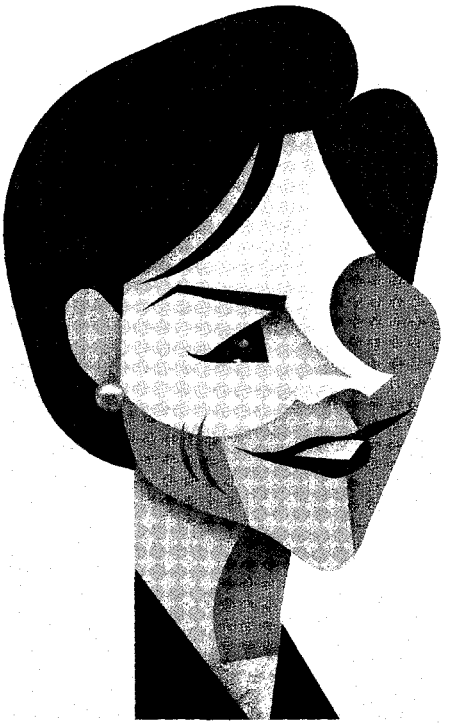
HOME SCHOOLING

WHEN LAURA BUSH'S HUSBAND was running for president, she let everybody know she wouldn't be getting mixed up in politics the way her predecessor did. "I don't really even want to talk about issues that much," she said in July 2000. "I'm not that knowledgeable about most issues." But, this week, Bush broke her rule and made an impassioned plea to state legislators: "Teachers never get paid enough, especially now as a lot of states are cutting their budgets," the former elementary school teacher and librarian argued in an interview with *USA Today*. "I hope all the state legislatures will pay attention to it and try to do what they can to not cut teachers' salary budgets." Now, we share the First Lady's concern. But, before chastising state lawmakers across the nation, perhaps she should consult with the federal lawmaker who sleeps in her bed.

When President Bush passed his No Child Left Behind Act to great fanfare in 2001, he promised the states an extra $7 billion in federal education spending for this year—money that was supposed to finance investments like hiring more and better teachers. But, lo and behold, even as state budgets have plummeted into deficit, the president decided to whittle that number down to a mere $1 billion. (This, of course, at a time when he has managed to find $3 *trillion* in upper-bracket tax cuts.) The result is that school districts—which had been counting on the promised funds to help comply with Bush's new educational standards—are frantically looking to save money, some of which will come out of the pockets of teachers. Maybe Laura Bush should stay out of politics after all.

REVISIONISM WATCH CONT'D

AS WE'VE NOTED IN THIS SPACE before, every few weeks the Bush administration seems to revise downward the criteria under which we went to war with Iraq. In the months leading up to the invasion, the casus belli was Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction (WMD), which ostensibly posed a clear and present danger to the United States and its allies. As President Bush told the nation on March 17, "Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised." After the invasion, when such weapons proved elusive, Bush redefined the threat as past weapons "programs" rather than existing weapons themselves, saying in June simply that "intelligence throughout the decade showed [Iraq] had a weapons program." Now, John Bolton, the undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, has outdone even his boss. At a conference last week in Paris, Bolton told the Associated Press that whether Saddam possessed WMD "today or four years ago isn't really the issue." The issue, rather, is Saddam's "coterie" of WMD scientists, who embodied "the capability that Iraq sought to have ... WMD programs." The good news, we suppose, is that Bolton has now set the bar so comically low that it's hard to imagine anyone else in the administration being forced to lower it further.



Laura Bush

DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL

AT LEAST BOLTON CLAIMS TO BE paying attention to the WMD issue, though, which is more than can apparently be said for the secretary of defense. Flying home from a five-day trip abroad that included a tour of Iraq, Donald Rumsfeld demurred when asked by reporters about progress in the search for WMD. "I have so many things to do at the Department of Defense," Rumsfeld explained. "I made a conscious decision that I didn't need to stay current every fifteen minutes on the issue. I literally did not ask. ... I'm assuming he'll tell me if he'd gotten something we should know." Rumsfeld's lack of curiosity is particularly striking given that the "he" to whom he was referring is David Kay, the American official in charge of the WMD search. Rumsfeld met with Kay for half an hour and, if you believe his statement, didn't ask once about Kay's primary mission. We're not quite sure which is more disturbing: the possibility that Rumsfeld is lying or that he's telling the truth.

PASSIVE INTELLIGENCE

SEVERAL WEEKS AGO, THE NEW REPUBLIC reported on the disturbing meekness of the Senate Intelligence Committee under the leadership of Pat Roberts and Jay Rockefeller, the senior Republican and Democrat, respectively ("Don't Look Now," July 28 & August 4). Roberts, unlike predecessor Richard Shelby, has been largely content to shill for the administration, obstructing a

DAVID COWLES

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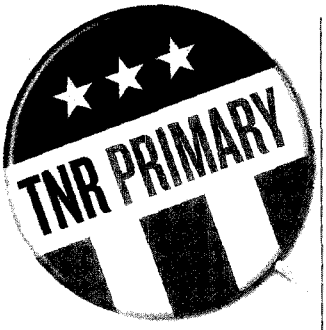
public inquiry into WMD intelligence until Uraniumgate forced his hand; and Rockefeller—who admitted to *Roll Call* that national intelligence is "much more complicated" than his own policy focus, health care—has lacked the expertise or inclination (or both) to challenge Roberts. Both men are now playing to type on another sticky issue: whether to declassify sections of Congress's September 11 report apparently linking Saudi Arabian officials to the attacks. Senate Democrats, including six of eight on the Intelligence Committee, have signed a letter to the White House calling for declassification, a move also supported by Republican Senator Sam Brownback. One of the two Intelligence Committee Democrats who declined to sign was Rockefeller, who, along with Roberts (and the White House), claims declassification would jeopardize national security. The leadership vacuum is so acute on questions of intelligence that now even other Republicans are moving to fill it. Maine's Susan Collins, chair of the Senate Government Relations Committee, is leading her own investigation into Saudi links to terrorism. Shelby, now chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, has indicated that he may follow suit. At this rate, the passivity of Roberts and Rockefeller may get them what they deserve: irrelevance.

OOPS

"START WITH [CALIFORNIA'S] INDIVIDUAL income tax, which has six brackets and is steeply progressive. Its top marginal rate of 9.3% is among the nation's highest but, worse, it kicks in at just $38,000 of income. This means that the likes of nurses and janitors already pay to the state a dime of every $1 in higher salary they receive."—*The Wall Street Journal* editorial page, September 2.

Question: If the top rate starts at $38,000, forcing janitors to pay the same marginal rate as millionaires, then how can the tax system be considered "steeply progressive"? ■



SMALL PACKAGES

Candidate: John Edwards
Category: Domestic Policy
Grade: B

Responding to a question about health care policy on September 4, John Edwards noted that he would establish a national health translation center—open 24 hours per day, seven days per week, and presumably available by telephone—in order to help doctors and nurses communicate with patients who speak different languages. This probably struck most viewers as a blatant pander to Hispanic voters, and it probably is. But pandering sometimes leads to good, innovative ideas. And this is one of those cases. If you spend any time speaking with health care workers in communities with large immigrant populations—and that pretty much describes every large city in the United States—you'll hear over and over again what a problem the language barrier presents. At best, it leads to wasted time and effort; at worst, it leads to catastrophic medical-treatment errors. What's more, federal law actually requires that hospitals and doctors provide translation services, but it's an incredibly onerous, largely unrealistic requirement, particularly in cities where the patients in the E.R. speak 20 different languages. The national translation center is a very small idea. But it's also a very good one.—Jonathan Cohn

BIO ENGINEERING

Candidate: Howard Dean
Category: General Likeability
Grade: D

Last week, *The New York Times*' Adam Nagourney hit upon a basic truth about the Dean campaign: It tries to avoid any and all discussion of its candidate's biography. This stands him in stark contrast to his competitors, especially John "mill-worker's son" Edwards and John "'Nam vet" Kerry, who flash their personal histories in every appearance and with every handshake. But don't mistake Dean's silence for a high-minded stance against the confessional culture. He avoids his own biography because many of its details would only cause him problems.

Unlike Kerry and Clark, Dean didn't serve in Vietnam. He spent part of those years skiing in Aspen—even though he supposedly had a bum back. There's no talk of his log-cabin roots, because his log cabin was a beach house in the Hamptons. And nobody likes a Park Avenue Populist, as a friend of mine calls him. As a result, when he does talk about his bio, Dean is forced to fall back on safe subjects, such as the bike trail he built around Lake Champlain and his days stuffing envelopes for Carter. For now, Dean has compensated for this less-than-inspirational story with simple rage. But, once he has to appeal to voters beyond his activist base, that will no longer be enough. —Franklin Foer

FORGETTING SOMEONE?

Candidate: John Kerry
Category: Intellectual Honesty
Grade: C

With four of our last five presidents hailing from statehouses, it's pretty obvious that Americans have lately preferred to elevate governors to the nation's highest office. But don't tell that to John Kerry. In an interesting bit of political jujitsu, Kerry tried to recast senators as the only officials capable of handling the presidency. In a September 9 interview with Manchester's *The Union-Leader*, Kerry declared, "We've seen governors come to Washington, ... and they don't have the experience in foreign policy, and they get in trouble pretty fast. Look at Ronald Reagan. Look at Jimmy Carter and, now, obviously, George Bush."

Kerry's comment—a not-so-veiled attack on former Governor Howard Dean—is downright silly. For starters, he somehow left our most recent Democratic president, Bill Clinton, off his list. (Oops.) More important, Kerry's claim doesn't hold water. True, Clinton stumbled in Haiti and Somalia, but he also was victorious in Kosovo. Similarly, Reagan—whether or not you credit him with winning the cold war—was not bereft of successes abroad, including significant arms talks with the Soviets. On the flip side of the coin, Lyndon B. Johnson's vast senatorial experience didn't save the country from Vietnam, a war started by another former senator, John F. Kennedy. Attempting to link foreign policy successes and failures solely to the time a president spent inside or outside the Beltway before taking office is laughable. Kerry may think that September 11 changed the nature of the presidency and that a job title now matters more than ideas and policies. But, if so, isn't he just making the case for Wesley Clark?

—Josh Benson

For primary items updated daily and complete candidate rankings, visit *www.tnr.com/primary*.

CARICATURES BY ZACH TRENHOLM

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Campaign Journal

Candid Camera

BY RYAN LIZZA

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

THE NEWEST MUST-HAVE accessory on the campaign trail this season is the minicam. Everyone at tonight's Democratic debate in Baltimore seems to be carrying one—campaign aides, a small corps of documentary filmmakers, the 18 reporters from NBC and ABC "embedded" with the candidates, even some print reporters. Behind the scenes, the debate is like a hall of mirrors, with reporters, candidates, and celebrities all filming each other. After the show, as reporters huddle around Howard Dean and pelt him with questions about Israel and Iraq, I feel someone rubbing up behind me. It's George Clooney, filming the whole scene for his new HBO drama, "K Street." (Asked if union rules allow him to operate the camera, he assures me, "Local 600, man.") Later on, Clooney films a film crew filming Dennis Kucinich as a reporter films Clooney. At another point, there is a minicam standoff. Several reporters get locked out of the building when they leave to interview the hecklers who had been ejected from the theater. Inside, several people film the forlorn reporters through glass doors, as the reporters outside film them back.

Maybe all of this mixing of reality and fiction is having an effect on John Kerry, because he still hasn't quite figured out what his campaign is about. Recently, Kerry had been punctuating his stiff sobriety with flashes of humor. In New Mexico last week, when questioned on whether the United States should ask Mexico to pay U.S.-level wages, he chuckled, "Well, we can ask them, but they'll say no." At the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) political convention Monday, a note card fell from his podium; when an SEIU member picked it up for him, Kerry had the crowd roaring with laughter when he responded, "That doesn't happen to me at home." Tonight, though, we get the windy, senatorial Kerryisms of yore—culminating in a closing statement that seems spontaneously cobbled together from one-liners reflecting each stage of his campaign.

He starts with a familiar, content-less statement about the weighty times in which we live ("an extraordinary moment in American history"), before launching into an attack on George W. Bush's prevarications ("This is the biggest say-one-thing-do-another administration in all time"). Halfway through this passage Kerry seems to suddenly remember he is addressing a black audience—the Congressional Black Caucus is sponsoring this debate—so he rattles off an example of how Bush has insulted African Americans ("goes to Goree Island, spends a few minutes, behaves like Abraham Lincoln, goes to South Carolina, behaves like Jefferson Davis on the Confederate flag"). Next, Kerry remembers that the campaign's newest tack is to assail Bush as a toady of "powerful interests," so he throws in a sentence about Bush catering to campaign contributors. Finally, he closes with a line about patriotism, which was last week's theme. Afterward, Kerry skips the candidates' group photo and the post-debate spin room, as if to underscore his lack of presence in the evening's events.

With Kerry fading into the wallpaper, the main storyline of the night is Joe Lieberman's attacks on Dean. Onstage, Lieberman goes after Dean for his recent statement that "it's not our place to take sides" in the Middle East conflict, which Lieberman said "break[s] a fifty-year record" of U.S. policy. Offstage in the pressroom, each man's sweaty aides carry on the battle with dueling press releases. For months, the Lieberman camp has promised the debates would be his moment to shine, and, in the two debates this month, Lieberman has certainly forced himself onto center stage.

But it's not clear that Lieberman can actually win this fight. On the Israel issue, for example, Lieberman nails Dean on substantive grounds: The former Vermont governor, perhaps without even realizing it, used the loaded language of neutrality, which to Middle East experts is code for a retreat from America's historical support for Israel. But, even when his attacker is right, Dean's counterattacks are almost always more effective. "It doesn't help, Joe, to demagogue this issue. We're all Democrats," scolds the man who became the front-runner with a dash of demagogic attacks on his fellow Democrats. Intellectually honest? Maybe not. But Dean effectively blunts Lieberman's attacks. ("We wish Senator Lieberman the best in all his future endeavors," gloats Steve McMahon, a senior Dean adviser, after the debate.)

Dean's arrogance still haunts him, though. When asked about his appeal to blacks given that Vermont is 97 percent white, he gets off one of the night's best lines: "Well, if the percent of minorities that's in your state has anything to do with how you can connect with African American voters, then Trent Lott would be Martin Luther King." But Dean, who never seems to leave a good thing alone, continues, "I'll tell you why I connect with African American audiences. I'm the only white politician that ever talks about race in front of white audiences." That, of course, is absurd. Even John Edwards, who rarely attacks his rivals, felt compelled to issue a statement the next day calling Dean's remarks "divisive." Expect one of those famous Dean apologies in the next few days.

Overlooked in all the sparring with Dean is the fact that one of the best punches of the night is thrown by the scrappy Dennis Kucinich. Dick Gephardt, eager to explain away his vote for the war, has begun emphasizing his anger at Bush for ignoring Gephardt's advice to get U.N. backing. Indeed, listening to Gephardt, you might think that he spends most of his time advising Bush on national security. By my count, Gephardt mentions three separate conversa-

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tions where Bush ignored his foreign policy advice ("I told this president a year and a half ago that, if he wanted to deal with Iraq, he had to get the U.N. ... I met the president in the Oval Office on nine-twelve. ... I said to him in another meeting ..."). The problem with this argument, as Kucinich politely notes, is that it was Gephardt, by fully backing the White House's position, who undercut support in the House for an amendment demanding U.N. involvement.

If Bob Graham's campaign were doing better, reporters would also be nailing him for trying to have it both ways on the war. Graham used to argue that he was to the right of Bush on Iraq. On the Senate floor last year, he said he was voting against the war resolution because it was "too timid," "too limiting," and "too weak." He wanted the president to have even more authority to take on terrorists across the Middle East. But, tonight, Graham attacks from the left, reading from the war resolution and noting, "My friends, those who voted for that, gave the president a blank check. We cannot trust this president with a blank check." The line conveniently ignores that last year Graham wanted to give him much more—as he put it, a resolution that "would contain what the president has asked for relative to the use of force against Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq, and more."

But why dwell on all that? Graham is one of the nicest guys on the campaign trail. After the debate, he spends longer than any other candidate in the spin room, amiably chatting with all comers. As the room finally clears out, he spots Clooney. "If you need someone, I have quite a resumé," says Graham, apparently seeking an audition for "K Street." To prove his point, Graham sings a couple of bars—as he is wont to do at almost any time—then boasts, "I have been a gaffer for Burt Reynolds!" Finally, he invites Clooney to hang out on the road with him in Iowa. Clooney gives a noncommittal response and politely backs out of the conversation. A few feet away, someone silently records it all on a minicam. ■

Montgomery Dispatch

Not a Prayer

BY JASON ZENGERLE

A ROADSIDE SIGN reading "HURRY BACK TO THE CITY OF OPPORTUNITY" is the last thing people see before crossing the railroad tracks and heading out of Hobson City, the oldest black town in Alabama. But the sign is a cruel, if unintended, joke: People seeking opportunity aren't likely to find it in Hobson City. The textile plant is closed, and jobs at the nearby Anniston Army Depot are scarce. Almost one-third of Hobson City's approximately 850 residents live in poverty, and many of the rest aren't doing much better. The historic town's leading engines of opportunity these days, one local told me, are bingo and crack.

But, for a brief moment this summer, it seemed like a glimmer of opportunity might finally shine on Hobson City and the many other beleaguered parts of Alabama. The state's Republican governor, Bob Riley, proposed an ambitious tax plan that sought to raise $1.2 billion in new revenue, mostly by boosting property and income taxes on Alabama's wealthy, who currently are taxed at one of the lowest effective rates in the nation—a mere 3 percent. The plan, Riley argued, would not only help Alabama overcome an expected $675 million budget shortfall; it would generate enough extra money to actually improve state services—especially schools, which are funded at the lowest per-child rate in the nation and produce students who, last year, tied for last in a national writing test. "I'm tired of being first in things that are bad and last in things that are good," explained Riley, who, prior to being elected governor last year, had not once voted to raise taxes during his three terms in the U.S. House of Representatives.

At the same time, Riley's plan sought to lower the tax burden on Alabama's poor—who pay an effective tax rate of 12 percent—primarily by upping the state's income tax exemption from its current level of $4,600 to $20,000. To justify this, the governor cast the tax plan in religious terms. "According to our Christian ethics, we're supposed to love God, love each other, and help take care of the poor," Riley, a devout Southern Baptist, said. "It's wrong, it's immoral to charge somebody that makes $4,600 a year an income tax."

Riley's plan passed the legislature in June. But that was just the first step. Alabama's tax code is written into the state constitution, which can only be amended by statewide referendum. And, when Riley put his plan to Alabama's voters on September 9, the state's wealthy didn't heed Riley's moral message to help the poor; sadder still, the poor didn't trust the messenger enough to allow themselves to be helped.

ON THE FINAL Saturday before Tuesday's referendum, Dr. Randy B. Kelley, the pastor of Hobson City's Rising Star United Methodist Church, called a meeting to drum up support for the tax plan. Kelley had been active in the tax reform campaign, traveling to "Vote Yes" meetings and rallies across the state. But, more often than not, he found that he was one of the only black people in attendance. "I was the only fly in the buttermilk," he told me.

Although black Alabamians—who account for one-quarter of the state's population but half of its poor—stood to benefit most from Riley's tax plan, polls showed that not many supported it. Part of the problem was that black state legislators had been slow to endorse the tax plan because they were angry with Riley for his veto of a bill that would have restored voting rights to certain ex-convicts. Another factor was that the tax plan's opponents—primarily the state's timber interests, its farm federation, the leadership of

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Riley's own state Republican Party, and the Alabama chapter of the Christian Coalition—had waged an aggressive campaign to mislead low-income voters about who the tax plan would most benefit. One ad that anti-reform forces ran on black radio warned, "Our property taxes could go up as much as fo' hundred percent"—which sounds like a lot until you realize that the current annual state property tax on a $100,000 home is less than $40, and that, for low-income families, any property tax increase would be more than offset by an income tax reduction.

But, most of all, it seemed that black Alabamians were just skeptical that any governor, much less a governor like Riley, would actually look out for their best interests. "When a rich, white, Republican governor comes in and says, 'I'm doing something that's going to lighten your load and increase the load on my natural constituents,' that's not easy for black people to swallow," Hank Sanders, a black state senator from Selma, told me. Which is why Sanders, who was one of the first black Democrats to endorse Riley's plan, was doing all he could—with radio ads and town-hall meetings—to explain to his constituents why they should vote for it.

The same impulse was behind Kelley's Saturday meeting in Hobson City. Kelley had invited one of Alabama's leading tax-reform proponents—a University of Alabama law professor named Susan Pace Hamill, who last year wrote an influential law-review article titled "An Argument for Tax Reform Based on Judeo-Christian Ethics"—to address his congregation. But, when the appointed hour came, fewer than a dozen people had shown up. "I'm a little disappointed by the crowd," Kelley said before introducing Hamill. "But I'm a believer that God will send you not who you want but who you need." One of the congregants who attended was less philosophical. "I bet, if the Reverend had told people there was going to be some booty-shaking, he'd have some folks here," she said.

SURE ENOUGH, THE night before, 10,000 people had gathered in Birmingham, about 60 miles west of Hobson City, for that very reason. The occasion was a free concert, hosted by Riley's tax campaign and featuring Birmingham's favorite son, "American Idol" winner Ruben Studdard. It was the second of two concerts that The Velvet Teddy Bear—as Gladys Knight famously dubbed the rotund Ruben—was doing on the tax campaign's behalf, and Riley seemed grateful for the help. "I think Ruben Studdard is probably the best ambassador Alabama has had in a long, long time," the governor told a group of reporters shortly before Ruben took the stage. "And he's probably as placid an individual as I've ever met."

So placid, alas, that Ruben never saw fit to mention the cause on behalf of which he was performing. As concertgoers streamed into the arena, campaign volunteers passed out flyers and bumper stickers urging a yes vote on the referendum. Ruben's mother, an Alabama teacher, delivered a video message—broadcast on two large screens flanking the concert stage—in which she said, "If we could just get people to go out and vote [for the referendum] like they voted for Ruben on 'American Idol,' then we could take care of some of these problems." But the flyers and stickers were quickly discarded, and the testimonial by Ruben's mother could barely be heard above the arena's din. Out on the concourse, the lines at the concession stands selling "Get Rubenized" T-shirts were long, while the tables bearing campaign literature were largely ignored.

And, while Ruben commanded the arena's undivided attention, he performed his set as if it were just another concert. The only nod he gave to the night's ostensible purpose was during his encore. After singing a few verses of "Sweet Home Alabama," Ruben interrupted the song and said, "Now this man right here did everything he could to bring me here. ... Y'all give it up for Governor Riley, c'mon." With that, Riley walked onto the stage to a smattering of applause to dance alongside Ruben as he finished the song. What it had to do with tax reform was anybody's guess.

BUT, NO MATTER what happened on that Friday and Saturday, the most crucial day of the referendum campaign, its supporters said, would be the Sunday before the vote, when Alabamians—93 percent of whom are practicing Christians—heard what, if anything, their pastors had to say about the tax plan at that morning's church services. People remembered Alabama's last major referendum campaign, when Sunday sermons played a decisive role in persuading voters to reject a constitutional amendment that would have authorized a state lottery. "On the last Sunday before the lottery vote, polls showed 55 percent for it and 45 percent against it," recalled J. Wayne Flynt, a professor of history at Auburn University. "And it failed by almost exactly that margin. There was nearly a 20 percent shift, and a lot of that was because of what went on in the churches that last Sunday."

But, while Riley did secure general statements of support for his tax plan from Alabama's mainline Protestant denominations, those didn't translate into many actual endorsements from the pulpit. During Sunday worship at Birmingham's Sixteenth Street Baptist Church—one of the most important and politically active black churches during the civil rights struggles of the 1960s—Pastor Arthur Price merely encouraged his parishioners to vote in the referendum without bothering to recommend which way. "I'm leaning toward voting for it," he told me after the service, "but, as far as our congregation is concerned, I'm leaving it up to them."

And it wasn't just black ministers who were silent on tax reform. Many white ministers were tight-lipped, too—mainly because, even if they themselves supported the tax plan, they didn't necessarily see it as an appropriate topic to address from the pulpit. "This tax proposal was not motivated purely and simply out of an effort to bring equity in the tax code," said a Baptist minister who pastors at a church near Birmingham and privately supported the plan. "It was

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motivated because there's a shortage of money in state government, and they need to fix it." Other white ministers who supported the plan, especially Baptists, were reluctant to publicly endorse it for fear of risking their jobs. "The Southern Baptist Church is very democratic. There's no bishop to protect a pastor from one or two wealthy members who are angry at the pastor and want to get him fired," explained Auburn's Flynt, who is also a Baptist preacher. "I've talked to ministers who've said, 'I'd really like to take a position on this, but I can't afford to; I have no protection.' "

And then there were the religious leaders who opposed the plan, arguing that the government simply needed to do a better job of managing its finances. The Christian Coalition of Alabama—breaking with the national organization, which had endorsed Riley's plan—campaigned against the referendum, printing up 1.7 million voter-education pamphlets that painted it as a choice between "a $1.2 billion tax increase or good stewardship."

Given these dynamics, it was little wonder that supporters of the tax plan, in the campaign's final days, were looking to spiritual powers higher than mere ministers. "All the numbers make it look like this isn't going to win," Hamill told a small gathering of referendum supporters in Gadsden on the Saturday before the vote. "But I believe miracles do happen. ... I think intercessory prayer ought to be a big part of this."

THERE WOULD BE no miracle. On Tuesday, Alabamians went to the polls and overwhelmingly rejected Riley's tax plan, voting against it by a more than two-to-one margin. Riley conceded defeat that night in a Montgomery hotel ballroom, explaining that the state would now have to make "difficult" budget cuts but that he would do his best to protect "the least among us." Commentators wondered if Riley could ever recover from the setback.

But, on the same day voters rejected Riley's Christian case for tax reform, some Alabamians gathered to praise the governor for his position on the state's other pressing religious issue: the public display of the Ten Commandments. Last month, Riley had angered many Christian conservatives by declining to support Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy Moore's refusal of a federal judge's order to remove a granite monument of the Ten Commandments from the state judicial building. So a group calling itself the Spirit of Montgomery decided to press the issue and last week presented the governor with a small granite reproduction of the biblical laws to display in the state Capitol. On Election Day, about 40 members of the group went to see the reproduction, which Riley had hung alongside posters of the Code of Justinian and the Magna Carta in a brand-new "Foundations of Our Law" exhibit placed in a back room of the Capitol.

The Spirit of Montgomery members were overjoyed. "Father, we thank you, oh gracious God, for your spirit and for touching the governor," a local minister said, his hands outstretched, as he led the group in an impromptu prayer. When he finished, people breathed a loud "Amen."

"God is here," a man said, his voice seeming to tremble. "God is in this state." ■

Jerusalem Dispatch

Roadblock

BY JOSHUA HAMMER

JOHN WOLF, WHO took a leave from his post as assistant secretary of state for nonproliferation to become President Bush's special envoy to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process three months ago, doesn't like to draw attention to himself. Since arriving in Jerusalem in June, Wolf, who had no previous experience in the region, has been a stealthy, almost invisible presence, granting no interviews and making no public statements. Instead, Wolf spends much of his time quietly shuttling around Tel Aviv, Ramallah, and Gaza City, meeting with top Israeli and Palestinian officials. As recently as six weeks ago, American diplomats insisted that Wolf's low profile and inexperience could work to his advantage. After three years of failed peace initiatives, they said, the time had come for "fresh faces to solve old problems." One Western diplomat told me Wolf was particularly proud of a small victory his team accomplished several weeks ago. After Palestinians near the town of Qalqilya complained that their children were being forced to travel 15 miles around the Israeli security barrier to get to school, Wolf's team exerted quiet pressure on the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), which agreed to open a gate early each morning, saving the kids an hour-long commute.

Yet, even as Wolf and his team were celebrating the Qalqilya micro-victory, the overall peace effort was coming undone. On August 19, a Hamas suicide bomber killed 21 Israelis on a bus in central Jerusalem. In response, the Israelis launched a strike at Hamas spiritual leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin. And, last week, following a series of humiliations at Yasir Arafat's hands, Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas, whose ascension last spring was hailed by the State Department as representing "a triumph of American leadership," finally called it quits. Abbas is about to be replaced by Palestinian Legislative Council Speaker Ahmed Qurei, seen by some as closer to Arafat; regardless, Abbas's resignation leaves the road map in shambles.

Joshua Hammer is Jerusalem bureau chief for NEWSWEEK *and author of* A SEASON IN BETHLEHEM: UNHOLY WAR IN A SACRED PLACE, *to be published this month by Free Press/Simon and Schuster.*

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Wolf's experience underscores the fundamental weaknesses of America's handling of the peace process: Though the Bush administration has been quick to tout superficial breakthroughs, it has been nearly helpless to deal with any of the core issues at the heart of the conflict. Critics say implementing the road map was always going to be an uphill battle—the gulf of hostility dividing Israelis and Palestinians is too deep. But the administration, which saw the road map in part as a tool to facilitate the Iraq war, never made a real attempt to breach that gulf. It took a half-hearted approach to the road map from its inception and made crucial mistakes along the way that guaranteed its failure. It repeatedly underestimated Arafat and failed to bolster Abbas when he needed America's help most. The U.S. monitoring team was short on clout. And, rather than helping the situation, Wolf's decision to keep his operation in the shadows only compounded these problems.

THIS WEEK'S CHAOS marks a long decline from June 24, 2002, when Bush publicly embraced the creation of a Palestinian state and set in motion the process that led to the drafting of the road-map text last December. Crafted by a team of U.S. State Department officials working with other members of the diplomatic "quartet"—Russia, the United Nations, and the European Union—the six-page document was distinguished from all other U.S.-backed peace initiatives since the outbreak of the Al Aqsa intifada by two facts. First, it exacted a series of confidence-building measures from both sides simultaneously, rather than demanding that the Palestinian Authority (P.A.) initially move against militant groups. Second, it established two clear goals: the establishment of both a "provisional" state by the end of 2003 and of a permanent Palestinian state two years later.

The early days were a time of optimism. Under intense international pressure, Arafat agreed to name his moderate longtime deputy, Abbas, as prime minister, and the Palestinian Legislative Council in Ramallah endowed Abbas with the power to appoint a Cabinet. In June, Abbas achieved a *hudna*, a three-month cease-fire, with Palestinian militants. During the "*hudna* holiday" that followed, the longest lull in the violence since the beginning of the Al Aqsa intifada, both Israelis and Palestinians tasted the tangible benefits of peace. Israelis strolled along beachfront promenades and filled restaurants and nightclubs. Israel removed its tanks and troops from both Bethlehem and large parts of Gaza, creating a brief feeling of euphoria among Palestinians.

But, even in those early days, the White House's heart wasn't in the plan. According to officials, the White House saw the road map as a way to shore up international support for the Iraq war—particularly in Britain, where Tony Blair was pressing for a Middle East peace process—by tying the downfall of Saddam Hussein to a wider vision of Middle East peace. Meanwhile, after the September 11 attacks, Bush and his team came to identify strongly with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and accepted, nearly without question, his initial objections to the road map—Sharon's Cabinet approved the road map in principle but tacked on 14 objections that would make implementation difficult. Key White House figures—including Elliott Abrams, who holds the Middle East brief at the National Security Council, and vice presidential Chief of Staff I. Lewis Libby—were lukewarm about the document, believing that its parallelism failed to address Israel's security concerns.

Without clear White House commitment, momentum began to stall after the first few weeks. Israel wanted the Palestinians to assume formal control of two more West Bank towns, Jericho and Qalqilya, and negotiations about the handover finally started in late July. But Abbas didn't want his security forces to replace the Israelis as minders of the gate in Qalqilya, which is surrounded by the Israeli security barrier. During the handover negotiations, which stretched into August, Abbas demanded that Israel remove checkpoints outside the West Bank town and open the gates. When he was rebuffed, the Qalqilya handover collapsed.

From there, both the Israelis and the Palestinians began ignoring their road-map commitments. Abbas and his security chief, Mohammed Dahlan, did not begin disarming and arresting members of Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, as they were obliged to do. Abbas and Dahlan argued that they faced serious obstacles in waging a crackdown. Arafat still controlled more than half of the 53,000-man security forces, including Force 17, the elite bodyguard unit whose officers, according to the IDF, have often worked hand in hand with Hamas. But it was also clear that, with or without full control of the security forces, Abbas was not going to engage in a potentially violent campaign against the armed militants without the endorsement of the Palestinian "street." "We won't start a civil war," Ziad Abu Amr, the chief P.A. negotiator with Hamas, told me. "Morally and politically, we won't go into an internal, bloody fight for any reason." Instead, Palestinian moderates argued that the *hudna* should be renewed after three months. Then, if the Israelis withdrew from the West Bank and Gaza, if life steadily improved, and if the P.A. reestablished credibility, the radicals could be disarmed without a bloody confrontation.

For his part, Sharon also ignored the road-map requirement that he freeze settlement construction, remove roadblocks in the West Bank, and dismantle illegal outposts. According to Western diplomats and Israeli observers, settlement growth has sharply accelerated in the past year. A large expansion is underway in the Gush Katif bloc in Gaza, and in July the Israeli Supreme Court approved the construction of a new apartment building in the Tel Rumeida settlement in the heart of Hebron. In July, 1,000 new immigrants from a Zionist group, Nefresh B'Nefresh, whose funding is provided by Jews and evangelical Christians, arrived at Ben Gurion Airport, where top Israeli officials greeted them. At least 300 members of the group will take up residence in West Bank settlements. Meanwhile,

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the IDF removed only nine out of the more than 200 manned and unmanned obstacles that impede movement in the West Bank and Gaza, and construction of the security fence continued apace with some minor modifications. And the removal of illegal outposts—typically caravan homes built beyond the borders of existing West Bank settlements—was by all accounts a charade. According to quartet sources, there has actually been a net increase of two outposts since June.

To some Palestinians, Sharon's actions confirmed suspicions that the road map was useless—that the Palestinian state promised by 2005 would be a shrunken, noncontiguous entity. Frustrated, Arafat supporters began to turn on Abbas. During Abbas's meetings in Washington with President Bush, there were rumors of dissent over the prime minister's failure to show any improvements on the ground, though Arafat himself was careful not to openly criticize Abbas. By the end of July and the beginning of August, dissatisfaction mounted, leading to a flow of negative public comments about Abbas in the Arabic and Western press, though none were directly attributable to members of Fatah's Central Committee or the Palestinian Legislative Council.

DESPITE ITS INITIAL equivocating over the road map, at this point the White House still had an opportunity to turn things around, to bolster Abbas and use its leverage to push both sides. Wolf was aware of the problems. Colleagues say Wolf believed that Abbas had been given a raw deal—that he was being forced to confront Hamas, Arafat, and the Israelis without the full support of the U.S. government. Wolf was also said to be concerned about the expansion of settlements and the construction of the Israeli security fence.

But the White House didn't seize the opportunity. "The problem is that the Americans deserted [Abbas]," says Ghassan Khatib, the Palestinian minister of labor. "The U.S. failure to pressure the Israelis led directly to Arafat's resurgence and Abbas's weakness." In fact, Wolf reportedly told Palestinians that he lacked the clout to stop Sharon from settlement expansion. The Israeli prime minister, knowing his ties to Bush and senior officials were secure, barely deigned to meet with Wolf, preferring to deal directly with the White House or with U.S. Ambassador to Israel Daniel Kurtzer, whose relationship with Wolf has been described by other Western diplomats as sometimes "strained." In the month before Abbas's resignation, Wolf tried to prod Dahlan to seize homemade rockets from Hamas militants in Gaza, make arrests, and take other concrete steps against Hamas, but the American envoy had already shown himself to be powerless, and Dahlan barely responded. Wolf "was the invisible man," says Yossi Beilin, a former Israeli justice minister and a negotiator at Oslo, who notes that the Israeli-Palestinian peace process requires Americans who use their bully pulpit to keep both sides on the peace track, not quiet diplomats who try to maintain a low profile.

Meanwhile, the United States grievously underestimated Arafat. White House officials believed that, by propping up Abbas and isolating the Palestinian president in his Ramallah compound, they would render him irrelevant. Palestinians, the thinking went, would ultimately wake up and reject Arafat's leadership. But Arafat, though weakened, continued to control key levers of power through his dominance of both Fatah's Central Committee and the Palestinian Legislative Council. The more ineffectual Abbas appeared, the easier it became for Arafat to whip up resentment toward Abbas and his men as stooges of the Americans. One indication of where the balance of power lay: After Abbas attempted to appoint a new administrator late last month to take charge of the bloated 70,000-man civil service, the ousted chief refused to leave, claiming he had Arafat's support. Armed Fatah cadres surrounded the administrator's headquarters in a show of support, and Abbas was forced to back down.

ABBAS'S RESIGNATION HAS left the Bush plan in ruins. In effect, the White House is back to where it was a year ago, when Bush called for new Palestinian leadership to emerge. The administration has all but abandoned the first phase of the road map and its calls for "parallel" confidence-building measures, and almost every diplomat and official I spoke to believes the 2005 projection for a Palestinian state is now a fantasy.

Moreover, with another election looming in the United States and postwar Iraq in disarray, diplomats in Israel don't expect the White House to expend much political capital on rebuilding the road map. Instead, the White House may leave it to Israel to try to bring peace in its own way. There was barely a murmur of protest over last week's attempted killing of Sheik Yassin, and members of Sharon's Cabinet believe that U.S. opposition to the expulsion of Arafat is less strident than in the past. Indeed, calls are mounting from Cabinet members to get rid of Arafat by the end of this year. Such a move could backfire. As Beilin points out, "Nobody from the Palestinian Authority will dare negotiate with Israel if we expel Arafat." Anyone who does so will "be regarded as a traitor."

In the back room at the consulate, meanwhile, Wolf and his team keep plugging along. Dismayed by the latest setback to U.S. policy, Wolf is nevertheless reportedly convinced that the road map can be salvaged. Wolf is said to be encouraged by the E.U.'s declaration last week that it would freeze Hamas's assets—he'd been urging for months that the quartet speak with one voice—and hopeful that Dahlan can still be prodded to take firm action against the militants. Another dozen American monitors are scheduled to arrive shortly, and John Collins, a former American cop, is developing a training program for the Palestinian police. According to sources, the monitors have taken a one-year lease on their rooms at David Citadel Hotel in Jerusalem, with stunning views of the old city. It is Wolf's hope, sources say, that by then Arafat will be history. Unfortunately, the peace process may be history as well. ■

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George Tenet undermines the CIA.

The Operator

BY SPENCER ACKERMAN AND JOHN B. JUDIS

On May 28, George Tenet delivered for the Bush administration. Nearly two months had passed since the fall of Baghdad. U.S. forces had turned up no weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq, raising the specter of gross misjudgment on the part of the U.S. intelligence community and allegations of presidential dishonesty. But, that day, the CIA announced that two trailers found in northern Iraq the previous month were actually mobile biological-agent production facilities. "Coalition forces have uncovered the strongest evidence to date that Iraq was hiding a biological warfare program," the CIA declared in a white paper immediately posted on its website. Within two days, President Bush was claiming vindication: "For those who say we haven't found the banned manufacturing devices or banned weapons, they're wrong; we found them."

Almost immediately, the story began to unravel. On June 2, the State Department's intelligence arm, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), analyzed the white paper and declared its findings premature. Within a month, *The New York Times* has reported, engineering experts from the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) had concluded that the most likely use for the trailers was to produce hydrogen, not bioweapons. Experts at the Institute for Science and International Security, a Washington arms-control think tank, reached a similar conclusion, though the military did not permit them direct access to the trailers. In late spring, David Albright, a former Iraq arms inspector who founded the institute, was told by Mahdi Obeidi—the Iraqi nuclear scientist who made international headlines in June when he offered up components of a gas centrifuge buried for more than a decade in his backyard—that the discovered trucks did not conform to the designs of Iraq's bioweapons program. According to Obeidi, the Iraqi fermenters for biological agents were stainless steel; yet the truck's fermenters had an exterior of galvanized steel.

Experts from around the world soon pointed out other flaws in the CIA's analysis. The trailers had canvas exteriors, which would have resulted in considerable downwind contamination had they been used to handle virulent biological agents. Yet no evidence of these agents has been found. The trailers also lacked autoclaves and other equipment for steam sterilization, an omission that would have risked contaminating the system. The pipes in the trailer were connected with threaded fittings or bolted flanges, though bio-production requires welding pipes together to prevent microorganisms from seeping through. Expressing a common sentiment, Steve Aftergood, an intelligence policy expert at the Federation of American Scientists (FAS), says that the white paper is "not about laying out all the facts and reaching a reasoned judgment. It is a piece of advocacy."

Indeed, both the conclusions about the trailers and the process that produced them closely resemble other CIA intelligence fiascos during the last seven years: the controversial targeting of the Al Shifa pharmaceutical factory in Sudan as a chemical weapons plant in August 1998, the release of a revised National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on the ballistic missile threat to the United States in 1999, and the NIE on Iraq's WMD in October 2002. In each case, the CIA's official verdict did not represent the best judgment of the intelligence community—or even the best judgment of the CIA's own analysts. Rather, it reflected an apparent desire to please political masters on Capitol Hill or at the White House. And, while those authorities bear responsibility for their own actions, so does the man who gave them intellectual and political cover: CIA Director George Tenet. Tenet surely deserves praise for his accomplishments throughout the last seven years, among them restoring the agency's sense of pride and putting it at the forefront of the war against terrorism. But, at several key junctures, he has failed at what he described in his May 1997 confirmation testimony as the CIA's main mission: to "deliver intelligence that is clear and objective and does not pull punches." In that respect, Tenet has seriously damaged the agency he sought to revive.

A New Penny

While CIA officials have traditionally hailed from the New England aristocracy, Tenet is the son of Greek immigrants who ran a diner in Queens's Little Neck neighborhood. His colleagues and friends attest to The New Republic that his bluntness, sharp wit, and sense of loyalty are pure "New York Mediterranean." After working his way through Georgetown and earning another degree from Columbia, he went to work on arms-control legislation in 1982 for Pennsylvania Republican Senator John Heinz; three years later, Vermont Democrat Patrick Leahy appointed him to the staff of the Senate Select Intelligence Committee. When Tenet first came to the committee, he knew very little about

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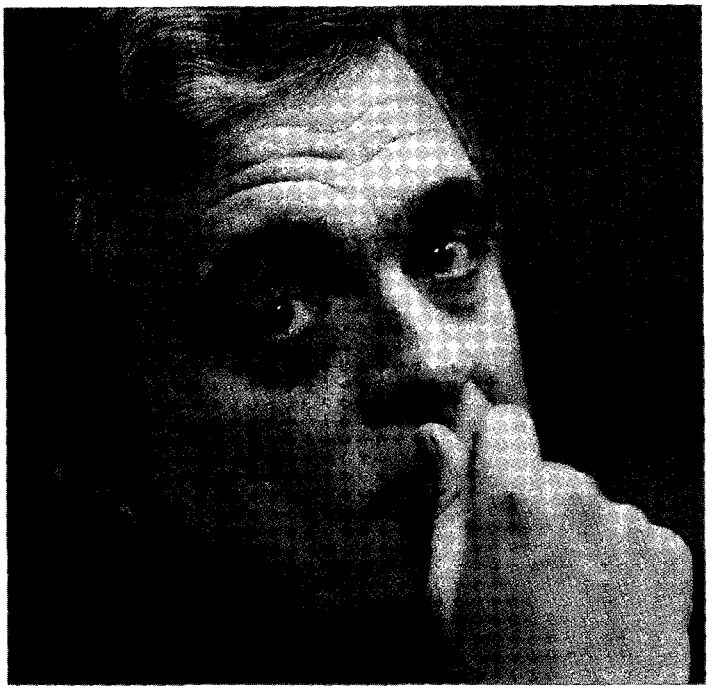
intelligence—one former staffer describes him as "truly innocent, ignorant"—but he learned the job quickly. Says one former colleague on the committee, "He was no rocket scientist, but he was grounded in the political process, he worked very hard, and he had good relations with other members of the committee." Committee Chairman David Boren, an Oklahoma Democrat, promoted Tenet to staff director in 1988. That winter, Tenet made his mark by drafting a position on the Reagan administration's Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty that was acceptable to both Republicans and Democrats. Then, in 1993, Tenet joined the Clinton White House as a national security staffer, where he drafted Presidential Decision Directive–35, which laid out priorities for the intelligence community, and where he also won friends among his colleagues. "It's sort of his chumminess," a former National Security Council (NSC) official recalls. "He gets really close to you, puts his hand on your shoulder."

As the NSC's point man on intelligence, Tenet had a front-row seat to watch the unraveling of the CIA. President Clinton had little interest in the agency. When a deranged aviator crashed a small Cessna onto the White House lawn in 1994, aides quipped that it was CIA Director James Woolsey trying to get Clinton's attention. Frustrated by his lack of access—and facing hostility from the Senate Intelligence Committee for his handling of the Aldrich Ames spy case—Woolsey resigned in December 1994. Clinton belatedly appointed John Deutch to succeed him and made Tenet his deputy. But Deutch, who longed to be defense secretary, was a disaster. In response to liberal complaints about rogue agents, Deutch made it more difficult for case officers at the Directorate of Operations (D.O.) to recruit spies. He put CIA Executive Director Nora Slatkin—whom many considered clueless—in charge of approving covert operations. And he sealed his fate with the D.O. by telling a *New York Times* reporter that, "compared to uniformed officers, [D.O. officers] certainly are not as competent." When Clinton passed Deutch over for the top Pentagon job in 1996, he resigned—to the delight of many at Langley.

That left another vacancy, one Clinton tried to fill with national security adviser Anthony Lake. But congressional Republicans, who had disdained Deutch, positively despised Lake, whom they blamed for everything they didn't like about Clinton's foreign policy. When they refused to confirm him, Clinton, eager to get someone confirmed after the bruising fight over Lake, quickly nominated Tenet, who had remained popular with the committee Republicans. At the time, recalls one administration member, "the big joke was when Tony Lake was shot down [by the Intelligence Committee] as being too political to be DCI [director of central intelligence]—and they're going to George instead. George as a political operator ran rings around Tony."

Tenet inherited an agency in disarray. Morale, especially at the D.O., which is responsible for human intelligence and covert action, was in a tailspin. Tenet's charm served him well from the start. While Deutch had tried to maintain a regal aloofness—bodyguards would shadow him when he visited the cafeteria—Tenet was open and friendly, dribbling basketballs down Langley's hallways and blasting opera and Motown from his office. Says Jeffrey Smith, who served as the CIA's general counsel in 1995 and 1996, "George is the first director in recent times that has really been embraced by the CIA family. Most of them going back to [Carter administration CIA Director Stansfield] Turner have had pretty rocky relations with the career CIA people. George is, I think, almost universally adored. ... [S]omeone says, 'Hi George,' and he just brightens up like a new penny." Tenet radiated appreciation for the case officers and agents that Deutch had scorned. One former intelligence aide says of Tenet, "George is great at putting his feet up, chewing on a cigar in his mouth, and talking dirty like the D.O. guys. He fits in great." Robert Baer, a legendary case-officer-turned-author who irritated his superiors at times, recalls, "When I got into trouble—which was fairly regularly—[Tenet] would put his arm around me and say, 'Ah, those jerks.' He could look you in the eye. He was a real person."

But Tenet faced a more daunting task in charming an indifferent White House. Clinton had ignored Woolsey and Deutch and had initially paid little attention to Tenet, asking for occasional memos but not seeing the CIA chief in person—and, in relationships with the White House, face time is everything. But Tenet finally got his chance to demonstrate usefulness to the president. After the Al Qaeda bombing of the U.S. Embassies in East Africa in August 1998, he was called to the White House to help plan how



In case after case during George Tenet's tenure, the CIA's official verdict has not represented the best judgment of its own analysts.

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and where the Clinton administration should retaliate. Tenet was determined to win the access that had been denied him and his predecessors. And he did—but in a way that provides an unsettling preview of what would happen four years later in the debate over WMD in Iraq.

Al Shifa

On August 7, 1998, Al Qaeda suicide bombers hit the U.S. Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, killing 257 people. To decide how to retaliate, Clinton convened a small group of principals, including the secretaries of state and defense, the national security adviser, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the CIA director. The White House wanted to attack Al Qaeda both in Afghanistan, where it had training camps and where Osama bin Laden resided, and in another country, preferably in Africa, where Al Qaeda's terrorist network enjoyed support.

Tenet's job was to provide targets. Says one former CIA official, "He thought it was the key mission of the agency and wanted to be very involved in the decision-making and was." The intelligence on Afghanistan was excellent. Satellite imagery had shown that bin Laden was operating out of training camps in Khost, near the Pakistan border. But the target in Africa was more difficult. If Tenet had presented what the intelligence community actually knew of Al Qaeda at that time, he might have had to acknowledge that he didn't have a sure target to propose. But Tenet was unwilling to disappoint the White House. So, in addition to training camps in Afghanistan, he proposed a pharmaceutical factory in Khartoum, Sudan, called Al Shifa. Tenet claimed that the factory was known to be producing EMPTA, a chemical compound that is an ingredient in the deadly nerve gas VX, and that its owners were linked to Al Qaeda.

Even before the attack occurred, *The New York Times* would later report, intelligence officials at the CIA and at the State Department raised doubts about both charges. But, at the meeting, Tenet, according to two knowledgeable sources, banged his fist on the table, arguing that Al Shifa was the right target to hit. On August 20, 1998, the United States attacked the factory with cruise missiles, killing one Sudanese and injuring ten others while demolishing the factory and its surroundings. Tenet reveled in his influence: According to a former CIA official who heard this from someone who was present, Tenet appeared at a meeting at CIA headquarters after the attack where he "boasted about his role in the nomination of the targets."

In the weeks and months that followed, however, the case for targeting Al Shifa fell apart. Tenet had based his claim that Al Shifa was producing VX on a single soil sample of EMPTA that a Sudanese informer had delivered to the CIA eight months before the embassy bombings. But, in the past, Sudanese informers had proved to be completely unreliable: In the mid-'90s, the CIA had to retract more than 100 intelligence reports based on Sudanese information that it discovered to be fabricated. The CIA never subjected the sample to the usual rigorous tests, and, what's more, it turned out the sample was collected 60 feet from the plant, off its property. One year after the cruise missile attacks, after the United States had blocked a U.N. attempt to send inspectors to the plant, the plant's owner hired Thomas D. Tullius, the chairman of Boston University's department of chemistry, to conduct tests on soil samples from where the plant had stood. Tullius sent soil samples to several laboratories that specialized in testing for weapons precursors, and they found no evidence of EMPTA or of EMPA, the compound into which it breaks down, even though traces of EMPA should have survived the missile attack.

At a Pentagon briefing on the day of the strike, an intelligence official had declared, "We ... [have] seen no commercial products that are sold out of this facility." But international observers, including NBC chief medical correspondent Bob Arnot and the German ambassador to Sudan, attested that it was Sudan's main pharmaceutical plant, producing about half of the country's drugs. Earlier, American officials at the United Nations had even approved the sale of veterinary drugs produced by the factory for export to Iraq under the oil-for-food program. Intelligence officials had also claimed that the plant had a "secured perimeter" and was "patrolled by the Sudanese military." But Pentagon aerial photographs, taken before the missile attack, failed to show any kind of security fence, and foreign observers familiar with the plant denied that it was guarded by the Sudanese military. One former CIA analyst who specialized in reading aerial photographs tells TNR, "When I looked at the prestrike imagery, in no way did it appear to be WMD-associated. It wasn't secure; there weren't any special security measures around it." The connections between the plant and Al Qaeda would also prove tenuous. Tenet and the Clinton administration had claimed that the plant and its owners had benefited from bin Laden's largesse. But, in March 1998, a Saudi businessman named Salah Idris had bought the plant from its original owners, apparently unbeknownst to the CIA.

With these complaints swirling around, the State Department's INR conducted a study of the Al Shifa attack. According to an intelligence official who was involved, INR "came up with the politically embarrassing conclusion that there was weak evidence." INR was particularly critical of the claim that the plant was producing VX or its precursor chemicals. Faced with these cascading doubts about the intelligence he had provided, Tenet upped the ante. At a closed Senate meeting on September 1, 1998, Tenet claimed that the CIA had now uncovered links between the plant's new owner and Al Qaeda. But, when the U.S. Treasury froze Idris's U.S. bank accounts, the plant owner sued. Required in court to show evidence of Idris's links to bin Laden, the Treasury Department backed off and unfroze his accounts. Tenet denied a request for an interview for this story, but he and top Clinton administration officials continue to defend

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the bombing. Yet Idris's connection to Al Qaeda and the plant's production of VX remain unproved.

Missile Defense

THE VERY SAME month that Al Qaeda was striking in East Africa, North Korea launched a three-stage ballistic missile known as the Taepo Dong–1 over the Sea of Japan and into the Pacific Ocean. It would spark a clash between the CIA and conservative Republicans in Congress—setting another unhappy precedent for the battles over intelligence that would mark the Bush administration.

In their 1994 Contract With America, House Republicans, citing the threat of "Third World attacks," had called on the Clinton administration Pentagon to deploy, "at the earliest possible date," a national missile defense. But the intelligence community's 1995 NIE had maintained that no country outside of existing nuclear powers "will develop or otherwise acquire a ballistic missile in the next fifteen years that could threaten the contiguous 48 states and Canada." So, in 1997, Republicans in Congress established a nine-member commission, chaired by then–former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and including two other missile defense enthusiasts, Woolsey and Paul Wolfowitz. The Rumsfeld commission concluded in a July 1998 report that North Korea and Iran would be capable of deploying a missile that "would be able to inflict major destruction on the U.S. within about five years of a decision to acquire such a capability" and that, "during several of those years, the U.S. might not be aware that such a decision had been made." Moreover, the report implied that both North Korea and Iran had already made that decision, placing "a high priority on threatening U.S. territory, and each ... pursuing advanced ballistic-missile capabilities to pose a direct threat to U.S. territory." Both countries, the report suggested, would be ready to threaten the United States with nuclear weapons by 2003.

Initially, Tenet stood by the CIA's 1995 findings that no such threat existed—and rightly so. Although the launching of the Taepo Dong–1 seemed to vindicate the Rumsfeld commission, the missile was no intercontinental-ballistic-missile (ICBM) precursor. Its all-important third stage could not withstand atmospheric reentry. Its softball-sized payload—much smaller than a nuke—fell helplessly into the sea. It even lacked a guidance system. And, today, neither North Korea nor Iran is anywhere close to an ICBM capability. But the Taepo Dong–1 launch gave congressional Republicans an opportunity to squeeze the CIA. Recalls former Democratic Senator Bob Kerrey, who was then the vice chairman of the Intelligence Committee, "There was tremendous pressure from people who were in a position not to appropriate money for [the] agency."

Tenet, who was also under attack from Republicans for allegedly allowing Chinese subversion at U.S. weapons labs, steadily gave way to the political pressure, ultimately agreeing to Republican demands for a new NIE on the missile threat and assigning the task to Robert Walpole, the national intelligence officer for strategic and nuclear programs. Since coming to the CIA from State, Walpole—an earthy, motorcycle-riding, Mormon bishop with a fierce intellect—had become Tenet's all-purpose troubleshooter, taking on such delicate tasks as the Chinese-subversion inquiry. Once handed the missile defense dossier, Walpole wasted no time smoothing ruffled feathers. Within weeks of the Korean launch, Walpole heaped praise on the Rumsfeld commission in a speech to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Then, in early 1999, he convened a group of analysts from the CIA, INR, DIA, National Security Agency, Air Force intelligence, and Department of Energy (DOE) to draft a new NIE.

The drafting process was overtly political. When analysts would propose formulations that diverged too far from Rumsfeld's report, Walpole would tell them, "We can't go to Congress with that," according to a participant. To make sure that the analysis didn't stray from what Congress wanted, Walpole brought in Rumsfeld himself as an outside expert to evaluate the NIE. "I never imagined that [Walpole] would be that blatant," an analyst who worked on the NIE tells TNR. But the analysts understood that Walpole was not acting without his boss's blessing: "We all assumed that major decisions involving this estimate would be vetted with George Tenet."

But Walpole still had a problem renouncing the 1995 NIE. Except for the abortive Korean missile launch, the intelligence community had not acquired data that would merit new conclusions about the foreign missile threat. Walpole solved the problem by subtly changing the criteria by which the threat would be evaluated. Missile threats had previously been judged according to "initial operating capability," a militarily significant term referring to successful missile tests and deployments. But, for this NIE, Walpole insisted that the standard be something called "initial threat availability"—or when a missile is first flight-tested, even though years typically pass between an initial test and a successful one. At the first meeting, one participant recalls, Walpole encountered "a lot of resistance by DIA and CIA line analysts and senior analysts who thought this was unprofessional." The same thing happened when Walpole wanted to characterize the North Korean missile as an ICBM prototype capable of delivering WMD: "The specialists said, 'Oh, come on.'" But, as the meetings went on and as it became clear that Walpole would not change his criteria, many analysts gave up trying to change his mind. By the fourth and final NIE meeting, dissenters were resigned to citing their objections in footnotes.

Tenet didn't participate until the final meeting, which featured the heads of the intelligence community's various agencies, with Tenet presiding. But, by that point, traditionally, most objections to NIEs are cosmetic: "The further along you get, the harder it is to raise big-picture questions," says

continued on page 27

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AMERICA'S ENERGY CRISIS: WHAT'S VIABLE?

Can We Avoid Another Black Thursday? A Definitive Debate On America's Energy Problems

On August 25, 2003, *The New Republic* convened a symposium of experts on the nation's energy infrastructure to discuss the future of the American energy supply and examine the most realistic and profitable solutions to America's short- and long-term energy needs. Though the symposium was scheduled prior to Black Thursday, that event added urgency to an already pressing debate. The panelists commented on issues that ranged from balancing increased power needs against environmental conservation imperatives, to incentives to spur capital investment in the energy sector, to current problems with transmission. The following is an edited transcript:

THE PANEL

ARTHUR WIESE
Vice President of Corporate Communications for Entergy Corporation

CARL SELIGSON
Senior Advisor to K-Road Management

DAVID SOUTH
President of Technology and Market Solutions

DR. ERNEST MONIZ
Director of Energy Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Laboratory for Energy and the Environment

MODERATED BY

MICHAEL CROWLEY
The New Republic Associate Editor

MICHAEL CROWLEY: There seems to be a division of opinion about why exactly the lights went out two Thursdays ago. And there is a school of thought that says that the problem has been a race to deregulate the power industry, which has left us with inadequate oversight and no one really accountable for lapses in the power grid, which can create cascading blackouts. On the other hand, there are people who believe that deregulation has not gone far enough. And the power industry needs more incentives — more of a sense that they can turn a real profit by upgrading our power grid infrastructure.

There's a new study out from the Electric Power Research Institute warning that upgrading our electrical grid nationwide is going to cost $100 billion. So, I suppose one way to open this conversation about this rather broad subject is to ask our panelists, What did we learn from the blackout?

Is the problem that we have deregulated too far? That we have not deregulated enough? Or that we are caught in this sort of transitional moment, where we're neither here nor there. Or do any of those categories apply?

CARL SELIGSON: From a financial point of view, the Wall Street community believes that A, there was a significant underspending on transmission in the last ten years or so. B, that the blackout itself will be hopefully impetus to get something passed in Congress. C, that it's been a large amount of squabbling, between particularly the Southeast and the Northwest, versus the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), and what they wanted to do. And D, investors aren't happy with uncertainty, which you could say about any business at any time. Investors would prefer some degree of certainty, before committing their dollars. And clearly, the low returns that have been allowed and earned on transmission, compared with what looked like obscene profits that could be earned from deregulating generation, helped to move this dollar for investment into generation.

The disruption clearly has brought this issue of energy policy and of transmission investment to the forefront. How long it stays at the forefront is anybody's guess. Clearly, it will have something to do with what Congress does or doesn't do when they come back.

ERNEST MONIZ: Could I take a step back and make some comments of prologue? It's a useful context to think about what the National Academy of Engineering did in 2000. They decided to publish a list of the Top 20 engineering achievements of the 20th century.

I think if each of us, including myself, started to think about our top one, I'd bet most of us would be inclined towards computers. Lasers. You could say something like space travel. But the answer was electrification. They said the number one engineering achievement of the 20th century was electrification.

And there were two lessons in that. One is

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electrification is such an important determinant of quality of life. It's an engineering achievement that touches everybody all the time. Secondly, it reflects something that very few of us ever think about: What a complicated, enormous machine it is.

[Imagine] a renewable wind farm, connected to an amazing transportation system in a complicated network coupled to a distribution grid that takes a load voltage so you don't fry yourself every day — 110 volts, for example, coming into your house — coupled to your loads: your air conditioner and your lights, et cetera, et cetera, with all of them having to operate in synchrony all the time.

We don't think about that with a flip of the switch. And that's one reason [why] Black Thursday is very important. But the discussion is not only about the transmission line, [it is also] about the system: The power plants, the transmission distribution system, and the loads.

Later on, we can talk about what a serious integrated policy is, in terms of addressing that global system. Now, having said that, I think most would agree, and would have said even before Black Thursday, that if you wanted to pick the weak link today, it is the transmission system.

Where the generators are, with regard to the transportation system, can make a big difference. And so, where plants are placed is another aspect of perhaps how a national energy policy should go.

Given that little prologue, let me go back now: the race to deregulate. First of all, I think it's very important to get away from the incorrect use of the word deregulation. No one's talking about deregulation.

One is talking about restructuring the regulatory framework, to represent and allow, facilitate, a competitive market set of transactions. So, it's really a different form of regulation that was being proposed. The second problem is the word "Race." That's actually the problem. There was no race. The starting gun went off in 1992 with the last major energy legislation through Congress. The so-called EPAC, the Energy Policy Act, relieved certain restrictions on access to the grid.

The independent power producers who thought everyone would make lots of money were allowed to get on the grid. The problem is [that since] we got started, there [has] been an awful lot of, "Oops. Well, maybe we don't really want to go there," in different parts of the country.

As a result, we have a system that intrinsically spans a huge geographical region, which may not work. Yet we do not have any rules of the road for governing the system across commensurate geographical mountains.

Now I'm on the side that says we can't go back. Too many eggs have been broken. But we've got to finish the job one way or another. Decide what the rules are. Are we going to have regional organizations or not?

ARTHUR WIESE: We have sort of a trifurcated situation at the moment, with about 20 states that have deregulated. Some of them have required that when the transmission assets of the old monopoly utility companies were sold, that a strong central independent system operator was appointed who really had authority over how the grid operated. And New York would be an example of that.

Ernest Moniz
"WE DO NOT HAVE ANY RULES OF THE ROAD FOR GOVERNING THE SYSTEM ACROSS GEOGRAPHICAL MOUNTAINS."

In the Midwest, you have independent system operators [in] the same role, but [they] have a vastly smaller amount of authority. The decisions are still really made by the utilities. And then you have half the states that are not deregulated at all, where the transmission system is run by individual corporations.

At some point we're going to have to make a collective decision in this country about whether we are going to be regulated or we're not. We seem to be operating on a local option system, which has some shortcomings in it.

MODERATOR: There's been sort of a classic muddle on Capitol Hill, an energy bill, that went nowhere for about two years. Republicans wanted to pass it in July, I believe. They had a bill they were trying to get through. They failed, and picked up an old Democratic bill that passed the year before, gaveled it through and said, "We're going to go ahead and rewrite it in conference."

But there are some particular ideas on the table now involving the role of FERC and also regional transmission groups. Any thoughts about what you think Congress will do, and what it should do, in response to this? Is this an appropriate time for them to try to do something quickly?

DAVID SOUTH: The fundamental question is whether or not you're going to get a holistic bill to cover all the energy issues or [if] it's somehow going to be divided to address more the critical issues right now, which, in the forefront, is the transmission issue.

SELIGSON: I would say that if you look back at the history of the proposed bills, and of the differences between what the Democrats and Republicans, or the House and the Senate, there are certain areas that don't look to me, as an interested observer, to be compromisable.

Whether or not we're not drilling in the Alaskan National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) is not a compromisable issue. The question is whether that has to be in a bill to get a bill passed or whether that will be eliminated from the bill.

The same for something like the automobile fuel economy standards. And then the other bill, of course, has to do with the environment. And there's a whole dispute there as to whether or not it covers three polluters or four polluters.

WIESE: I would say, don't put too much faith in the willingness of either politicians or the American people to make real trade-offs when it comes to this question of energy and the environment. We have now, for over 30 years, really avoided [trade-offs] as a culture.

The transmission system is just one where we have been unwilling to look at the question of how we provide an even more reliable electricity system, while at the same time [allowing] local communities, and sometimes just local pressure groups, to block the siting of new power plants [and] new transmission lines. We don't want to make those kinds of trade-offs. We don't want to make trade-offs on replacing foreign oil, as much as we need to do that for

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environmental reasons, and geopolitical reasons, as well. Because that would mean drilling for natural gas, the logical alternative, in many of those places that are sacrosanct to the environmental movement, like off the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.

On the other side of the equation, we don't want to make any hard decisions about things like renewable fuels. Certainly the Green Lobby has been advocating renewable fuels forever. On the one side, a wind farm off Nantucket Sound — many of the people who are most associated with arguing for a clean environment have been absolutely opposed to putting that wind farm there. Apparently wind energy is good, as long as it doesn't block [someone's] expensive view of the ocean.

We could do a lot more with fuel standards if we had the willingness to do it. But we're not willing to give up SUVs. We could do a lot more to address the climate issue if we were more supportive of nuclear power. These are just trade-offs that this society seems to have an aversion to making. And until we're really serious about those, I'm not sure that any bill is going to make any breakthrough difference in our energy situation in the United States.

MONIZ: I think that as far as the bills go, there are a lot of sideshows — like ANWR drilling in the Arctic — which are not issues that are going to stop in any way, or help, the serious legislation that's being discussed.

The same way politicians could not pass a bill because there was such a lack of anything approaching consensus — this year, they cannot not pass a bill, because people are going to be looking for action.

It's a no-brainer now that mandatory reliability standards are everybody's favorite. There will probably be some additional financial incentives for new transmission capacity. The House already has that in their bill . . . Those incentives may or may not be meaningful in terms of actually resulting in action, and there we can have a real debate. Some would say that until there is some more certainty about the regulatory future incentives may not have nearly the impact today that one would hope.

So I think that's likely to be what comes out. It will be kind of the minimum, noncontentious, helpful. But it's not going to be addressing the fundamental issue underlying this whole restructuring.

I do want to say one last time that if we focus only on the easy thing — How do we increase capacity of the grid? — we will not have gone to a systemic solution about how the generators and the transportation system and the loads all need to be discussed, to have an economic, environmentally preferable, and secure system.

SOUTH: Not only do we have an energy bill, but we also have a number of environmental pieces of legislation. Clean Air Legislation that is also being proposed. We have a major conflict between the Energy Bill and the piece of environmental legislation.

Because we're talking about increasing supply [to] try to meet load. But at the same time, we have a major division in how we're going to reduce our emissions, which largely comes from fossil fuel sources. Nuclear power holds an opening there, in the sense that it's not only a reliable source of power . . . it's also emission-free with respect to all the air pollutants and carbon emissions.

ArthurWiese:
"APPARENTLY WIND ENERGY IS GOOD, AS LONG AS IT DOESN'T BLOCK [SOMEONE'S] EXPENSIVE VIEW OF THE OCEAN."

If we're going to solve an energy problem, I think we ought to look at stability of supply, and recognize [that] it has to be environmentally preferable to us. We need to possibly couple those two pieces of legislation in some way, so that there's recognition that we're not just promoting an alternative that meets part of our requirements but negates the other part, which is: How do we provide clean air and avoid health concerns that arise with smog and ozone that arise during the summer months in the urban areas?

MODERATOR: Pete Domenici, who is Chairman of the Senate Energy Committee, had initially proposed about $15 billion in subsidies for nuclear power in the Energy Bill, which was scrapped. And it is now unclear whether those subsidies can be put back in, in the House-Senate conference, but it seems possible. And one does get the sense that Congress is less and less hostile to the idea of nuclear power. Do any of you have any thoughts about what is likely to happen, what the effect of subsidies on that scale would have on the industry, and how that would play into the broader questions that we're talking about?

MONIZ: At MIT, we just finished a two-year study on the future of nuclear power. If you're interested, it's on the web at www.mit.edu/nuclearpower. We view ourselves as a group as neither pro- nor anti-nuclear. We were just studying the role nuclear power could play as an option, particularly for addressing climate change.

However, we did an analysis — a market analysis, as a merchant plant model — of building new plants. Natural gas, coal, and nuclear. Based upon experience, and not upon dreamy ideas of how good it's going to be tomorrow, a new nuclear power plant, [with] levelized costs, would be significantly higher than those of gas and coal.

Number one, we believe that some of the cost reductions for nuclear are plausible, but need to be proved. Twenty-five percent reduction in capital cost. We believe it's plausible. Number two, natural gas, as many of you know, at least for the next 15 or 20 years, has got a pretty scary cost profile.

It is a critical subject for discussing how the power sector evolves, and how our industrial sector evolves. Because natural gas not only is good for power, it's very critical [for] the chemistry industry.

The third factor is that it was our group's belief that we really must begin to address the issue of global warming and climate change. We are convinced the United States will eventually join other countries in doing so. That means the cost of carbon emissions, one way or another, is going to be internalized. Unless internalized, the cost equation is quite different.

If nuclear can do, in fact, the plausible reductions in cost, and if we begin to pay for . . . carbon dioxide emission avoidance, that cost equation begins to look very different.

We then advocated something as an incentive to see about whether we can build nuclear power plants in this country [that are] economically competitive. It was a very

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different proposal from Sen. Domenici's. So, as Domenici proposed a loan guarantee, we proposed a production tax credit for some first set of nuclear power plants built with modern technology.

The production tax credit would have a lot of attractive features. First of all, you get nothing if you don't produce electricity. Entergy, or somebody else, might start a plant, take the loan guarantee, and default. You pay, you get nothing for it.

A production tax credit, just as wind power has today, could be a very good incentive for a small number of first plants. Indeed you see a production tax credit can be technology-neutral. We would argue for all carbon-avoiding technologies: wind, nuclear, coal, plus carbon sequestration. That's a more universal way to say that we are committed to looking at carbon emission reductions.

SELIGSON: Whether there's a production tax credit or a loan guarantee, this is still a small drop in the bucket relevant to the solving of these problems.

I say that the traditional investors in electric utilities in this country will be there with their checkbooks if they can see that there's an appropriate return to them.

MODERATOR: And how do we guarantee them that return?

SELIGSON: They're not guaranteed. That's another fallacy. The return is not guaranteed. Their return, the ability to earn the return, is what's guaranteed. The key to this whole thing is that investors will be there if they are not restrained or constrained by a variety of regulatory policies that don't allow the companies in which they're investing to have the ability to earn a fair return on the investment.

SOUTH: I think one of the things we have to look at with some of these more capital-intensive technologies or options is not just getting the option to earn a greater return, it's also the timeline.

For instance, a new coal plant is enormously capital-intensive [and it takes] a lot more time to earn that money back. The financial community today is very short term. They want to reduce their risks, and they don't want to invest for long periods. They want the higher return but they want it fairly quickly so they can roll that over and reinvest it.

Perhaps we need to look at some ways in which we take a longer-term perspective. We're not considering all the factors that we may need to [concerning] putting a plant in. We're not necessarily worried about what ramifications it may have in five years or 10 years in terms of the environment. And yet that's an important dimension that we need to look forward to.

WIESE: We have to look for an additional fuel source. Oil is a non-issue as far as generating electricity is concerned. So we're talking about coal, natural gas and nuclear as being the three fuels that are used to generate electricity. We've got to move this nuclear thing.

Carl Seligson: "DRILLING IN [ANWR] IS NOT A COMPROMISABLE ISSUE."

SELIGSON: You were talking about oil compensating. Relative to electricity, we're far more concerned with cloister coal dependency. Fifty percent of the electricity in the United States is generated by burning coal. Burning coal is a pollutant, [it] will continue to be a pollutant, and it will be more of a problem as we go on.

A number of years ago, [we worked] like hell to create things with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission so that you got away from a lot of the things that would cause the plant to take 10 years to build originally. Pre-advanced signing, standard design, et cetera, et cetera. It's time to get on with it and get a new plant built.

SOUTH: It was indicated that we haven't built a new nuclear plant in some time, [but] we actually have. In the last five years alone we've added 13 equivalent 1,000 megawatt plants simply to upgrade improvements in the performance of the plants.

The other thing that we're doing is avoiding glut loadings going into various locales where they're situated. We're avoiding emissions — nitrogen oxide emissions, carbon emissions, and whatever other kinds of air emissions you are concerned about. It's been as a result of more nuclear [and] not another fossil committed source.

It doesn't really matter which clean air bill is passed because the Environmental Protection Agency right now has rules in place to knock down these emissions and basically force a switch to move away from fossil fuels. Again, we have an option in demand with a non-emitting power source: nuclear power. It gives us a tremendous amount of additional capacity that can be added at existing plants, [and] it's emission free.

MONIZ: Let me just finish by talking about the very long term where the solutions are less clear.

If you look at the carbon dioxide emission problem, global change, today the world uses about 400 quadrillion BTUs. All but 60 of that are fossil fuels. By mid-century, the world will be at more than 1,000. We hope so, because if not we're going to have a lot of political problems in many parts of the world. Those countries need energy to grow [in] the developing world.

However, we probably cannot increase our fossil fuel use and meet the climate change problem. So the non-fossil energy sources have got to grow from like 60 to 600. That's the big challenge, but there's no silver bullet. Efficiency, nuclear, renewables, and coal: We probably need some significant contribution from all of them if we have any hope of meeting the energy and economic aspirations of the third world on a 50-year time scale, and doing so without screwing up the climate change problem.

MODERATOR: I'm not sure we came up with all the answers, but it's a great start.

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continued from page 22

one former analyst. According to a participant at the meeting, Tenet was "charming, backslapping, cracking jokes, passing coffee and cookies around. He was a very good schmoozer" who tried to display his neutrality by asking some questions about the NIE's findings, the participant says, but everyone understood the main points were not subject to change. In the end, only INR filed a formal dissent from the findings of Walpole and Tenet's NIE. Having won what amounted to a CIA endorsement of their findings, Rumsfeld and the congressional Republicans were predictably jubilant. Floyd Spence, the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, praised the report for its "troubling picture" of "a world where rogue states" could "hold the American people at risk here at home." But the Republicans were not merely happy. They were wiser, too. They had learned that, with the application of enough pressure, Tenet and his CIA could be rolled.

Iraq

September 11, 2001—and the intelligence failures that preceded it—brought forth calls for Tenet to resign, most notably from Republican Richard Shelby, then–vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee. But they fell on deaf ears at the White House. Tenet had cultivated a close relationship with President Bush since before the 2000 election, even naming the new CIA building after Bush's father. Tenet's irreverent cigar-in-the-mouth style also appealed to the young Bush. Says one knowledgeable source, "They were buddies, got along very well personally. Bush liked George's style." While Clinton had rarely opened the Oval Office to Tenet, Bush invited him to give briefings several times each week.

But, during the week after the September 11 attacks, Tenet became indispensable. Since becoming the director in 1997, Tenet had been holding daily meetings with the agency's Counterterrorism Center to plot a course of action against bin Laden and his organization. When the attacks came, he was ready. While the Pentagon admitted to the president that it had no war plan for carrying the battle to Al Qaeda, Tenet produced one practically off the shelf. Says one former CIA official, "When the political will caught up with what they were doing, which unfortunately took September 11, then they were in a position to take quick action because of all the legwork they had done." The plan worked marvelously, ousting the Taliban from Afghanistan within months. The CIA director became a valued asset to Bush. Tenet now briefed the president daily at 8 a.m. He had gained greater access to the White House than any director since Ronald Reagan's, William Casey.

But, just as the CIA's work was ending in Afghanistan, a new challenge to Tenet and the agency was emerging. Since the September 11 attacks, Deputy Defense Secretary Wolfowitz and other neoconservatives had been calling on the administration to oust Saddam Hussein from Iraq. By the winter of 2002, they had gained the support of Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, and Rumsfeld, who had returned for a second tour as secretary of defense. To gain congressional and public support for a possible war, they wanted to demonstrate that Saddam posed an impending threat to the United States through his links to Al Qaeda and his access to WMD. But the CIA posed a formidable obstacle. In its annual report to Congress on "worldwide threats," the CIA had downplayed any immediate danger from the Iraqi regime, and, in its initial analysis of the September 11 attacks, it had rejected any connection between Saddam and Al Qaeda.

In response, Pentagon neoconservatives put into motion the same strategy they used with the Rumsfeld commission. Acting through a newly reconfigured Pentagon bureau under the direction of Undersecretary Douglas Feith, his deputy William Luti, and RAND Corporation academic Abram Shulsky, they pored over previously analyzed CIA data to connect Saddam to bin Laden. And they had powerful allies. Despite his daily CIA briefings, Cheney, in mid-2002, made several unusual visits to Langley to discuss the Iraq threat with the low-ranking analysts working on the file. According to a former CIA official still close to many of these analysts, Cheney's visits created a "chill factor" to "get the analysts on the same page." Says former analyst Pat Eddington, who worked at the CIA for eight years, "I will tell you that, in my time there, I never saw anything in the way of the kind of radical pressure that clearly existed in 2001 and 2002 and on into 2003."

Tenet was once again caught in a political pressure chamber—with the vice president's office and the Pentagon on one side and the intelligence community, much of which was very skeptical about the justifications for an invasion of Iraq, on the other. In the middle of 2002, Tenet confided to a friend that he was feeling "isolated" and was worried about pressure from the neoconservatives. As the friend recalls to TNR, "He has felt ... that they were pushing an agenda and wanted intelligence to agree with the agenda." Tenet was even thinking about quitting the CIA, a move his friend thought prudent. "I personally said to him, 'You stay too long, and your name is circled,'" the friend says. "'You're not part of the inner group. If things go wrong with the Iraq war, whose name is going to be circled to take the blame?'" Better, the friend advised, to leave at a relatively inconspicuous time, such as after the fall elections—before the final decisions on war had been made. But Tenet decided to stay on. "Like Colin Powell, he is a good soldier, who will stay as long as he's needed," his friend says.

Initially, Tenet resisted the pressure from the Pentagon and the vice president's office. During the summer of 2002, Democratic Florida Senator Bob Graham, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, asked Tenet in a private meeting to provide him with everything the CIA knew about Iraq's WMD, its ties to Al Qaeda, and the consequences of a war. Tenet had gotten along with Graham far better than he had with Shelby, and, before the end of the

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August recess, Tenet delivered to Graham a classified 25-page paper, with no cover or letterhead, answering Graham's questions on every item of concern. According to an official who read Tenet's classified responses, "It was a reasonable document," candid and balanced, summarizing what the CIA believed to be the threat from Iraq and the repercussions of using force to redress it. Since this report and a DIA assessment on chemical weapons that the committee received in early September 2002 were completely at variance with what Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and other administration officials were saying publicly, Graham and Illinois Democrat Dick Durbin called on Tenet to provide more information, including an NIE.

But Tenet didn't deliver another balanced assessment. Instead, in mid-September 2002, he and the CIA produced a classified document described by several officials who have read it as written, one recalls, "to take the most aggressive view of all available information." According to a source who saw the document, the assessment was indeed aggressive—it highlighted "extensive Iraqi chem-bio programs and nuclear programs and links to terrorism" and detailed every known or faintly rumored contact between Saddam's regime and bin Laden. What Intelligence Committee members found particularly objectionable was the document's treatment of the link between Saddam and Al Qaeda. According to a former CIA official who read the document, "They put everything that they found for the last twelve years and put it all into one document. It was a joke. It had eight hundred disclaimers in it. It basically said nothing, [but] they put it together anyway."

Stunned by what they read, Graham, Durbin, and others on the committee intensified their demand for Tenet to produce an NIE on the Iraq threat. It was not a request that Tenet could easily fulfill. "The White House didn't want it," says a source with direct knowledge of the effort. "They wanted to draw their own analytical conclusions." Faced with escalating and conflicting demands from the Bush administration and the committee, Tenet turned to the national intelligence officer who fended off the dogs the last time: Walpole.

Walpole produced an NIE by the end of September 2002, taking less than three weeks to complete what is usually a painstaking process—less time, jokes a longtime intelligence official, than it takes to coordinate "an interagency bathroom pass." Just as he had done in 1999, Walpole constructed an artificial consensus within a community that was sharply divided over the threat from Iraq. There were dissents, but they were relegated to footnotes and appendices. On some issues, the intelligence community indeed had reached a rough consensus. Practically all analysts agreed that Saddam had produced unaccounted-for chemical and biological weapons; the disagreement was over whether the programs were ongoing and whether they had yielded recent stocks. On the question of an Iraqi nuclear weapons program, however, Walpole's NIE far outpaced what the analysts were concluding. The NIE claimed that Iraq was "reconstituting its nuclear weapons programs"—a determination that earlier CIA statements had elided and that INR, along with most DOE analysts, continued to reject. It further claimed that Iraq was trying to acquire aluminum tubes to use for enriching uranium suitable for a nuclear bomb. INR and DOE analysts, who knew the most about nuclear weapons production, adamantly rejected the charge. And the classified version of the NIE reported that Iraq had tried to buy uranium from Niger and other African countries—a contention that CIA and INR analysts alike had found laughable and that would later generate so much controversy. On the basis of these highly unreliable claims, the NIE concluded, "Iraq could make a nuclear weapon in months to a year once it acquires sufficient weapons-grade fissile material."

Notwithstanding these distortions, the Walpole paper was still less overheated than administration rhetoric. For example, when presenting intelligence on the aluminum tubes, the NIE presented analytic opinion as "kind of a fifty-fifty split, take it as you will," according to an intelligence official who read it—a sharp contrast with what senior administration officials were telling the public. As a result, Graham requested that Tenet issue a declassified version of the NIE so members could use the document to inform their upcoming votes on the war. In early October 2002, Tenet delivered—only in this new version, he wiped clean the qualifiers, alternative explanations, and dissents. Whereas the DIA had told Congress its analysts had "no reliable information" about whether Iraq was producing chemical weapons, the declassified version of the NIE declared that Iraq had "begun renewed production of chemical warfare agents." An outraged Graham insisted that more be declassified, but Tenet sent only a single-page letter. Echoing the empty claims of the "aggressive" white paper that the agency had delivered to the committee in September, Tenet's letter spoke of "solid reporting of senior-level contacts between Iraq and al-Qaeda going back a decade"—quite in contrast to what his analysts had actually found. These reports didn't "go back" a decade; they were a decade *old* and didn't reveal any *current* contacts between Saddam's regime and Al Qaeda.

In his response to Graham, Tenet conceded that there was a "low" likelihood of Iraq launching an unprovoked attack on the United States. But, when Bush, in a speech in Cincinnati on October 7, 2002, suggested that Iraq posed an "urgent" danger to the United States, Tenet insisted that he had fact-checked the president's speech. Tenet issued a further clarification, saying, "There is no question that the likelihood of Saddam using weapons of mass destruction against the United States or our allies ... grows as his arsenal continues to build." In this statement, in his letter, and in the findings he provided to the Senate that fall, Tenet had already stopped acting as the head of a quasi-independent intelligence agency charged to deliver unvarnished information. As one former intelligence official put it, "He seemed like a man who had collected information that his bosses wanted to collect."

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CYA

TENET'S SERVICE TO the administration had won him a place in the war Cabinet—and in Bush's heart. The president even seemed aware of the toll Tenet's compromises were taking on him and, according to his friend, communicated a simple but consistent message: "Stay." But, as the controversy over the missing WMD finally began to rattle the White House this summer, the ties of loyalty that bound the two men frayed. Dogged by questions about the 16 words in his State of the Union address asserting Iraq's attempt to purchase uranium from Africa, Bush and his top advisers decided to blame the CIA chief. On July 11, national security adviser Condoleezza Rice said that Tenet bore responsibility for the inclusion. "If the CIA, the director of central intelligence, had said, 'Take this out of the speech,' it would have been gone, without question," Rice said. Afterward, Bush said, "I gave a speech that was cleared by the intelligence services."

But Tenet's famous political talents also included skill at the age-old Washington game of CYA, or "cover your ass." The same day that Rice and Bush blamed Tenet, the CIA director issued a formal statement taking responsibility for Bush's misstatement. But Tenet also made it clear that he had not personally seen or approved the 16 words. And, over the next few weeks, a succession of leaks revealed that Tenet had repeatedly warned Bush, Powell, and White House aides that they could not rely on the accuracy of the Niger claim. Two weeks later, two memos surfaced that had been written by Tenet to Rice and her deputy, Stephen Hadley, advising them to remove the reference to Niger from Bush's speech in Cincinnati. Hadley and Rice then had to apologize for the 16 words. Says one intelligence veteran who knows Tenet well, "He is always very careful about not putting himself in a bad position. When he took responsibility for the Niger stuff, look at what he said. He knew the letters were at the White House." Adds a former Clinton administration official who worked with Tenet, "He is an unbelievable paper-trail guy."

Tenet's counteroffensive put the blame squarely on the White House—where, certainly, much of it belongs. Says former CIA official Jeffrey Smith, "It seems to me a classic case where a president is trying to make the case for something that he believes is in the national interest and is prepared to selectively quote from the intelligence. ... They were pushing the community very, very hard." Kerrey points a finger at Rumsfeld in particular: "The secretary of defense has masterfully pushed all this onto George." But Tenet deserves blame, too. He encouraged public illusions about Iraq's WMD. And, in spite of his denials, he must take some responsibility for the recurrent claim that Iraq was trying to import uranium from Africa. Just days before Tenet had warned Hadley and Rice to remove references to Niger from Bush's Cincinnati speech, he allowed the same references into the NIE, which is supposed to be the gold standard of intelligence documents. Four days before Bush's State of the Union address, Tenet's trusted lieutenant, Wal-pole, advised Powell to include the uranium reference in his February speech to the United Nations. And who can believe that Tenet, who had fact-checked Bush's far less important Cincinnati speech in October, did not look over his State of the Union address before it was given?

Tenet must also take responsibility for the hyped report on Iraq's ties to Al Qaeda that the agency delivered to the Intelligence Committee in September. (Says Steve Aftergood of FAS, "In the fall of 2002, anything Congress is asking for on Iraq is going to be personally reviewed by [Tenet].") And, finally, he must take responsibility for the white paper on the trailers. In the past, the CIA, faced with evidence like the two trailers, would have first assembled experts from all the intelligence agencies and even from academia; it would have conducted a careful study—for months or even a year—and then issued a classified NIE. The White House or State Department could have then used the NIE as the basis for its own declassified white paper. But, in Tenet's eagerness to deliver ammunition against the administration's critics, the CIA completed the study within weeks, limiting the investigation to the CIA and the DIA (which answers to Rumsfeld's Pentagon) with no input from outside experts at State or elsewhere.

Within the CIA, episodes like this have taken their toll. While Tenet remains "wildly popular" in the D.O., there is a split among the analysts, according to the former official close to them. Some understand the pressure Tenet was under. Others feel he should have gone much further in protecting the integrity of their analysis. According to one ex-official, "They sort of think the success of his workings in the Clinton administration has been squandered." Tenet is probably secure in his job—Bush can't fire him without reopening questions about who is truly responsible for misleading the public about Iraq's WMD, and Tenet's friend is convinced that he will leave on his own timeline. But the careful balance he tried to construct between Congress, the White House, and the CIA has collapsed. Congressional leaders—such as Kansas Republican Pat Roberts, the chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, and Michigan Democrat Carl Levin, the ranking minority member on the Armed Services Committee—have soured on him. Moreover, the agency's intelligence statements now lack credibility not only on Capitol Hill but also within the larger scientific and policy community that sustains it—to say nothing of how they sound to foreign ears.

According to David Boren, Tenet has for years thought about how "history will judge" the CIA's top officials. Given the CIA's sorry state when Tenet inherited it, he may yet be credited with reviving the agency, giving it a sense of purpose, marshalling its resources to fight the war against terrorism, and keeping its critics at bay. But, at a moment when many in the CIA, probably including Tenet, had their doubts about the factual premises of the Iraq war, Tenet compromised his agency's mandate to "deliver intelligence that is clear and objective." The CIA—and the nation—will suffer the consequences for a long time. ■

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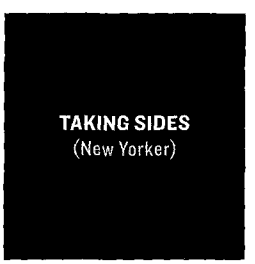
BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

The Past, Returning

MUCH OF HISTORY COULD use rearrangement. How often we wish that we could slip a hand into the record and adjust the past to improve upon what happened. This is also true of—besides political cataclysms—theater and film history. I felt it strongly in 1995 when I saw the London production of Ronald Harwood's play **TAKING SIDES.** If only chronology could be revised so that Balzac or Flaubert or Shaw could have been on hand to deal with this material. This is not to beat Harwood on the head with big names: it is merely to note that he had come up with a subject that was too large for his talent.



That subject was the case of Wilhelm Furtwängler in the de-Nazification trials of postwar Germany. This great conductor continued his career with the Berlin Philharmonic through most of the Hitler years, though he never actually joined the Nazi Party and never gave—or at least was never photographed giving—the Nazi salute. He also reportedly helped many Jewish musicians to escape. Harwood's play focuses on a pre-trial examination of Furtwängler by an American Army major. That major is a crass philistine who has never heard of the conductor, refers to him as a bandleader, and addresses him with all the finesse of a television detective.

Much of the play deals with the major's efforts to wring some sort of Nazi confession from Furtwängler or to discover evidence of his Nazi sympathies. More complex matters are skimmed over. Can art and politics be separated? (Furtwängler asserts that they can, but his life was proof that at most this can only seemingly be true.) Was he right not to exile himself in the 1930s because he was German and wanted to share his country's fate? (Marlene Dietrich, among others, was castigated in postwar Germany for having remained outside.) Was he justified in putting his duty to his orchestra, to the maintenance of German culture, above the political context of the time? (Toscanini, certainly Furtwängler's equal, absented himself from Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's realm.) All these matters, which need delicate exploration and roweling self-examination, were bundled up by Harwood into a cartoon of the major, a conventional portrait of an artist, and a shallow inquiry into the recesses of thought and character.

The film is better, not because Harwood's screen adaptation of his play is deeper but because some of the physical data help to make the ambience more authentic. The film was directed by István Szabó, the Hungarian who made *Mephisto* and *Colonel Redl* and *Sunshine.* Especially in the last, the chronicle of a Hungarian Jewish family through decades in turbulent Budapest, Szabó used the very buildings of the city to enrich the drama. In *Taking Sides,* he does the same sort of thing as far as possible, and also throws in—a touch too often—shots of the camps.

In point of fact Furtwängler was eventually cleared: Yehudi Menuhin was one of his advocates. Still, ideationally thin though the play and the screenplay are, two elements need comment. First is the impression that World War II was fought exclusively to rescue the Jews. Murderous anti-Semitism was halted, but the war had other purposes as well. Second is the implied bravery of the Allied inquirer into German behavior. The major keeps saying or suggesting that Furtwängler should have openly resisted the Nazis. What would the major have done, assuming that he was "Aryan" and would have had a choice? Resistance to Hitler was virtually equivalent to suicide. Certainly there were people who resisted, but is the major sure that he would have been one of them? Ex post facto heroism is a bit easier.

During the London production I kept wishing that Max von Sydow had played Furtwängler instead of an earnest but struggling English actor. During Szabó's film I wished the same thing. (If von Sydow is now too old, then that's another ground for wanting to alter chronology.) The film's Furtwängler is the Swedish actor Stellan Skarsgård, who is an improvement over the London one, but still he cannot suggest the long shadowy corridors of torment and courage that would have echoed in von Sydow's performance. (Remember him as Knut Hamsun.)

Szabó used too gentle a hand with Harvey Keitel as the major. Keitel is of course not responsible for the heavy-handed writing of the role, but not one word he speaks, not one movement he makes, is other than stale caricature. We can almost hear the way he will speak a line before he speaks it. The triteness of the role and its performance, instead of dramatizing the contrast between this philistine and the artist, makes the confrontation between the two men a smug setup. Surely there must have been some boors amid the U.S. investigative corps, but to draw the major as one of them is to shrink the subject.

In the only other prominent role, the major's secretary, a small, well-encompassed performance comes from the young Austrian actress Birgit Minichmayr. The secretary's father was a general who was executed under the Nazis, yet her repressed qualms at the major's behavior are nicely sketched by Minichmayr.

De mortuis. A few weeks ago Greta Garbo played Marguerite Gautier once more in George Cukor's *Camille,* and, miraculously, she was better than ever. But as I watched the television broadcast of the film, I quickly realized that every person I saw was dead. And there I was,

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transported by Garbo and her companions more thrillingly than ever before—by people long in their graves.

Obviously this was not a new experience. Ever since the first music recordings and the first silent films, departed artists have been moving us. But recordings are not the same in totality as sound films. Listen to any Chaliapin recording, marvelous as it is, and compare it with his Don Quixote in Pabst's film. Silent films, treasures though hundreds of them are, are not completed acting. Compare Garbo's silent Anna Karenina in 1927 with her Anna in the sound film of 1935.

None of us could possibly remember the number of times that dead film performers have held us, but in this latest viewing of *Camille,* Garbo, seemingly even more exquisite and even more fulfilling, confirmed that the sound film had added a new dimension to the art of acting. Technology has transmuted the physical into the metaphysical. The long-dead Garbo was revealing even more of Marguerite's *life*!

Most biographies of film actors treat their subjects in the orthodox birth-life-death form. Allowing even for the deterioration or disappearance of many films, this view is out of kilter. The shape of time has been altered by film. ■

Richard A. Posner

The End Is Near

ORYX AND CRAKE
By Margaret Atwood
(Doubleday, 367 pp., $26)

THE GENRE OF DOOM-LADEN futuristic fiction has its share of classics—such as H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine,* Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World,* and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*—and these works are now joined by Margaret Atwood's splendid novel. Extravaganzas of extrapolation, these novels identify a dominant contemporary trend and explore the ominous consequences of its being allowed to continue unchecked. For Wells, writing in 1895 and mesmerized by Darwinism, the trend was (he mistakenly thought) the polarization of England's social classes. The time traveler journeys 800,000 years into the future and discovers an England occupied by two human species, the Eloi and the Morlocks. The former are the dwarfish, childish, physically and mentally degenerate descendants of the English upper class; the latter are the equally degenerate descendants of the working class. The Morlocks live underground (Wells was struck by the tendency of manual labor, not limited to mining, to move underground) and produce the goods that the Eloi, who have no skills and do no work, need for survival. In exchange, as it were, the Morlocks prey on the Eloi, eating them when they catch them outdoors at night.

For Huxley, writing during the worldwide depression of the 1930s, the great social problem, as he and others believed (again incorrectly), was that technological progress, by enabling greater output to be produced by fewer workers, was making widespread unemployment chronic. Central planning would be needed to bring production and consumption into phase. Education would be part of the plan: it would be designed to boost consumption by inculcating a throwaway mentality ("ending is better than mending"). Technology—helping to solve the problem that it had created—would enable the creation of genetically distinct classes, ranging from high-IQ Alphas to near-moronic Epsilons, each perfectly fitted to a particular economic function, and in this way production would be rationalized.

In the 1940s, the focus of concern shifted to another type of centralization: the extinction of liberty by totalitarian governments. And so we have Orwell's vision of a near future in which Soviet techniques of social control would be perfected and universalized. (Wrong again, happily.) Now comes Atwood predicting the imminent extinction of the human race as we know it. Could she be right where Wells, Huxley, and Orwell were wrong?

In thinking about this question, we should bear in mind the precept of Atwood's teacher Northrop Frye that "poetry can only be made out of other poems; novels out of other novels." Atwood's literary debts are numerous. Her "pleebs" are Orwell's "proles"; the notion of rigid class distinctions based on intelligence rather than heredity is one that she shares with Huxley and Orwell; the technocratic elite who inhabit sealed-off "Compounds" in her novel correspond to the party members in Orwell's. The idea that animal-human hybrids (Atwood's "pigoons," created at "OrganInc Farms"—a name that neatly capsulizes her vision of the future) acquire human cunning with no diminution of animal savagery comes straight from Wells's *The Island of Dr. Moreau.* The idea that pigs possess a sinister intelligence informs Orwell's *Animal Farm.* And Atwood's protagonist, Jimmy, who after the culminating catastrophe renames himself "Snowman" (as in "Abominable"), is a knockoff of Robinson Crusoe: the title of her last chapter, "Footprint," is a clue.

There is more. Atwood's villain, Crake, reminds one of the villainous O'Brien in *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* while Jimmy, in his ordinariness and, after he has become Snowman, his physical decrepitude ("He looked down at his body in dismay"), resembles Orwell's hero, Winston Smith. The original title of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was *The Last Man in Europe,* and Snowman looks to be the last man in the entire world. The idea of social control through pharmaceutical and genetic interventions, prominent in Atwood's novel, is Huxleyan, while Jimmy's tour of the "Watson-Crick Institute," in which grotesque experiments are performed, echoes Gulliver's tour of the Laputa scientific institute.

I do not note these borrowings to scold Atwood (remember Frye's dictum). And I do not subscribe to such criticisms of her book as that Jimmy lacks sufficient intellectual and psychological depth to have moral insight, or that Crake's speciescide is insufficiently motivated. Moral understanding should not be confused with intellect, and the psychological springs of world-class villains are unknown. (That is the lesson of Hitler studies.) Crake is a perfectly credible twenty-first-century intellectual

Richard A. Posner is a judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit and a senior lecturer at the University of Chicago Law School.

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psychopath, with his faintly autistic, ascetic hyper-rationalism and his techie-bureaucratic talk, as in, "Let me walk you through a hypothetical scenario," or, "It was an elegant concept, though it still needed some tweaking." One knows men like Crake.

DISSATISFIED WITH THE HUman race, Crake sets out to destroy it and replace it with one of his own design. (He may have been pushed over the edge by disgust at his inability to master his feelings toward Oryx, the former child prostitute with whom both he and Jimmy fall in love.) Illustrative of the efficiency-enhancing features of this new designer race is the ability to process "caecotrophs." These consist of "semi-digested herbage, discharged through the anus and reswallowed two or three times a week ... a way of making maximum use of the nutrients at hand. Any objections to the process were purely aesthetic. That was the point, Jimmy had said. Crake said that if so it was a bad one."

There are terrific lesser characters as well, such as Jimmy's father and stepmother and his high school "Life Skills" teacher. It is the psychological verisimilitude of the characters in the novel that makes it seem that it is our world that is being ruined, and not some future world. But Atwood has written satire, not journalism or science, and she must be allowed liberties that are less forgivable in other genres, notably the liberty to exaggerate. The world that *Oryx and Crake* depicts is a recognizable version of today's United States, but it is also a caricature—how much of one is the question. The destruction of the nation's coastal regions (Harvard gone the way of Atlantis), and the horrific daily thunderstorms, and more ("as time went on and the coastal aquifers turned salty and the northern permafrost melted and the vast tundra bubbled with methane, and the drought in the midcontinental plains regions went on and on, and the Asian steppes turned to sand dunes"), exceed most pessimists' estimates of the effects of global warming. Yet even those who doubt many tenets of environmentalism, such as Bjørn Lomborg in his book *The Skeptical Environmentalist,* acknowledge that global warming will mean more rain and, owing to the effects of temperature on water, may endanger our coastal regions.

"ChickieNob" is "a large bulblike object.... Out of it came twenty thick fleshy tubes, and at the end of each tube another bulb was growing.... Just the breasts, on this one.... That's the head in the middle.... There's a mouth opening at the top, they dump the nutrients in there. No eyes or beak or anything, they don't need those." This horror is a plausible extrapolation from current genetically modified organisms, as are the pigoons and wolvogs and other animal hybrids in which the novel abounds. Even such creations as the Crakers, the designer race that features such improvements, besides a diet of caecotrophs, as skin impervious to the elements (so Crakers do not need clothes, and perhaps we are to think of them, in their nudity and radical innocence, as a parodic version of Adam and Eve), and a regular rutting season to eliminate romantic entanglements such as the Crake-Oryx-Jimmy triangle, and a horror of violence, are on the scientific horizon—as are the geekocracy (my word but Atwood's concept) in its gated Compounds; the complete destruction of privacy by the electronic media (Crake and Jimmy frequent such websites as "nitee-nite.com," where one watches people commit suicide); and the permeation of the atmosphere not only by pollutants but also by new germs, including human-engineered ones.

THE WORLD OF *ORYX AND Crake* is even more ghastly than that of *Nineteen Eighty-Four.* Yet what is particularly interesting in a comparison of the two novels is how Atwood has turned Orwell on his head. As in a number of recent science-fiction novels and movies (Atwood bridles at being called a "science fiction" writer, because the term, like "detective fiction," connotes a lack of literary distinction), her concern is with the consequences not of the excessive centralization of power but of its excessive decentralization. That is the difference between a Cold War dystopia such as *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and a post–Cold War dystopia. The Soviet Union's collapse is merely the most dramatic of the changes that have led to our current international system, with its proliferation of small nations, and its weakened governments and alliances, and consequent reductions in the efficacy of government regulation both national and international, and concomitant increases in the autonomy of markets, many of them global in their scope or effects. These interlocking developments (partially offset, to be sure, by the growth of the European Union) have been furthered by technological advances, particularly in the production and the dissemination of information (in the broadest sense, including entertainment) and in the creation of new biological entities. And the rate of scientific and technological progress in this new brave new world is accelerating.

The combination of international capitalist competition unshackled by governments with rapid technological progress is a libertarian's dream. Yet realists understand that there is a dark side. Individuals, corporations, and nations tend out of a natural selfishness not to internalize (that is, to take into account in their decisions) the full costs that their activities impose on people with whom they have no actual or potential contractual relations. A polluting enterprise, even if it is untrammeled by law or regulation, will consider the effects of its pollution on its workers, whom it may have to compensate in the form of a higher wage; but it is unlikely to consider the effects on society as a whole, let alone on the inhabitants of foreign nations or the members of remote future generations. That is the rationale for imposing legal and other regulatory limits on pollution and other "negative externalities," such as methods of computer encryption that might insulate criminal conspiracies from surveillance by law enforcement authorities; or, conversely, methods of surveillance that enable corporations and police to manipulate and intimidate the population; or experiments that could inflict cataclysmic harm.

Free markets have many good effects, and most of the attacks against them, and thus against "capitalism," are wide of the mark—but the absence of an international environmental protection agency and other global regulatory mechanisms leaves unsolved the problem of negative externalities that spill over national borders. The dangers are increased by the fact, paradoxical as it may seem, that technological advances can outrun scientific knowledge. We can build accelerators that cause particle collisions at greater and greater speeds, but according to the physicist Sir Martin Rees, Britain's astronomer royal, in his new book, *Our Final Hour,* the physics of subatomic particles is not so well understood that the following end-of-the-world scenario can

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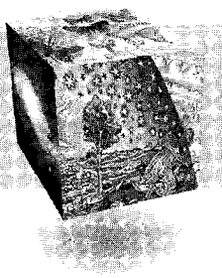
be dismissed as total fantasy. Very high energy accelerators (higher energy than what we have today, but possibly feasible in the not-too-remote future) might conceivably cause quarks, the building blocks of atoms, to "reassemble themselves into a very compressed object called a strangelet.... The strangelet could, by contagion, convert anything else it encountered into a strange new form of matter.... A hypothetical strangelet disaster could transform the entire planet Earth into an inert hyperdense sphere about one hundred metres across." Rees considers this "hypothetical scenario" exceedingly unlikely, but he points out that even a probability of one in a billion is not wholly negligible when the result, should the improbable materialize, would be the destruction of the world.

AN ECONOMIST WOULD BE INclined to add that even if the expected cost of a catastrophe is slight because the probability of the catastrophe (calamitous as it would be if it occurred) is minuscule, that slight cost might still outweigh the expected benefits of the project that created the danger, for they, too, might be slight. The benefits of more-powerful particle accelerators, minus the considerable costs in construction and in scientific manpower, may be small or even negative. (Or they may be great, especially if such accelerators increased our knowledge of physics to the point of enabling us to ward off other extinction events, such as a collision with an asteroid.) But no international institution is empowered to compel a cost-benefit analysis of such projects, and since they have potential military applications, it will be difficult to control them by treaty.

Rees, who is no crank (the title of the original British edition of his book was a less alarmist *Our Final Century*), also worries about the potential effects of nanomachines. These tiny devices—their size is measured in billionths of a meter—can in principle, and soon perhaps in practice, be engineered to resemble living cells, and, as Rees explains, conceivably could be "designed to be more omnivorous than any bacterium, perhaps even able to consume all organic materials. Metabolising efficiently, and utilising solar energy, they could then proliferate uncontrollably, and not reach the Malthusian limit until they had consumed all life." Also in the offing are robots with human and eventually, perhaps, greater than human intelligence. Human beings may turn out to be the twenty-first century's chimpanzees.

A more modest version of Rees's strangelet doomsday scenario, yet still a frightening portent, concerns the AIDS drug ritonavir (trade name Norvir). Two years after Abbott Laboratories began commercial production of the drug in 1996, a previously unknown—and, characteristically, more stable—polymorph (that is, a different crystalline form of the drug) appeared in Abbott's Illinois plant, and immediately the old form began converting to the new until the plant's entire inventory had converted. This precipitated a market crisis, because the new form did not have the therapeutic properties of the old one. Fortunately (or so it seemed), the new form had not yet been observed in the plant in Italy where bulk ritonavir was produced. But shortly after a visit to that plant by Abbott scientists from Illinois, the new form showed up there too, probably as a result of the "seeding" of the plant by minute crystals that had adhered to the scientists' clothing. As a result, the plant could no longer produce the old form. (The analogy of both ritonavir and Rees's strangelet doomsday scenario to "ice-nine" in Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle* is irresistible.) Such conversions are becoming more common, apparently because the conversion from one crystalline form to another is impeded by impurities—and impurities in the manufacture of chemicals are becoming rarer because of advances in the technology of manufacturing.

Abbott managed to create a new crystalline polymorph that possessed the therapeutic properties of the form which had disappeared through conversion. Yet the costs of eliminating the hazards thrown up by modern technology can be staggering. According to Lomborg, the costs of arresting global warming could be many more trillions of dollars than the costs of global warming itself. This is in contrast to the modest costs of substitution for the aerosols that threatened to destroy the ozone layer in the stratosphere. That substitution is the success story of international efforts to limit environmental hazards. But according to Rees, "it was a technological accident



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and quirk of chemistry that the commercial coolant adopted in the 1930s was based on chlorine. Had bromine been used instead, the atmospheric effects would have been more drastic and longer-lasting."

Lomborg is Greenpeace's bête noire, an "anti-gloom environmental propagandist," in Rees's words. Yet even Lomborg accepts an estimate of the social costs of global warming (discounted to present value) of $5 trillion. (William Nordhaus, the leading economic expert on global warming, estimates those costs at "only" $4 trillion.) So what Lomborg is really pointing to is an absence of institutional controls that has let global warming get out of hand. That is no surprise; the obstacles to the creation and the enforcement of such controls are formidable. They include scientific uncertainty about the unintended physical consequences of new technologies and also about their social consequences (who foresaw that labor-saving household appliances and advances in contraceptive technology would transform the social role of women, or that modern technologies of food preparation, transportation, and work would unite to produce a nation of fatties?); the scientific illiteracy of most officials and of the population at large; and the fact that many dangerous technological innovations have a considerable upside that make them difficult to block, and the related fact that international competition limits the power of any nation, even the United States, to regulate technology (the limits our government has imposed on stem-cell research are causing that research to migrate to Britain). Other factors include the steep discounting of future consequences by politicians because of limited terms of office; the tendency for technologies having military applications to set off arms races; the continuing acceleration of scientific and technological progress; and the fact that certain particularly dangerous activities, such as the production of new biological entities, require little investment and so are feasible projects for terrorist groups and even individuals, rather than only for nations, which are more easily deterred. Optimists will point out that science and technology have conferred more benefits on humanity than costs, and that is indeed true; but the balance may need to be re-struck now that human extinction is becoming a feasible scientific project.

My Place Is With You

My place is with you, the world's humble,
the mute of soul, who spin their lives in secret,
modest in thoughts and in deeds,
the unknown dreamers, wanting in speech and gaining in splendor.
Your pleasing spirit is stored away within you like a pearl at the bottom of the sea,
and your distinction ripens, like berries in the woods, in a haven of shadow.
Your hearts—a holy sanctuary, you lips—its sealed gates,
you were not told that you are princes,
you do not know that you are the soul's swells.
Artists of the beautiful silences, ministers of the dumbness of God,
no stranger's eye will ever capture the rejoicing within you, or the mourning.
A single light is always in your eyes, a bright quiet glow,
a single smile is always on your lips, full of wisdom and forgiveness,
with which to reckon, but not to judge, all that befalls you:
the large things and the trifles, the just and the unjust together.
Gently, gently, as if on tiptoe, you move through life,
with a wakeful heart, and a heedful ear, and a ranging eye,
and a spirit that trembles with every rustle of beauty and every stir of magnificence,
you pass and, without exertion or intention, you scatter faith and purity around,
they drip from your being as azure trickles from the sky and shade from the flourishing forest.

Truly you are schooled in stillness, who stifle voices and words,
nothing grand will come from your mouths and nothing high from your hands,
your desires will expire in your hearts and your longings in your bosoms will cease,
you have no stake among the visionaries and no portion of the glamorous estates,
your steps will die without heirs, leaving no echo or trace.
But your lives—they are your finest visions,
and your glory—it is that you existed,
o diligent keepers of God's image in the world!
Day by day, drop by drop, by the light in your eyes and the lines in your faces,
the loveliness of your lives will pour into the universe, as a hidden spring
spills into a river to refresh it, without the river knowing.
Not a flutter of your lashes will be lost, I swear,
nor will the smallest tremor in your souls fall to the ground!
Like the singing of the stars they will rise and vibrate forever in the vault of heaven,
they will live still and be alive in the last generation,
when not a scrap of the songs of Heman and Jeduthun remains
and not a memory of the wisdom of Chalcol and Darda,
and they will be revealed once again in the eyes of a man and in the image of his face.

HAYYIM NAHMAN BIALIK

— translated by Leon Wieseltier

THE HELPLESSNESS OF GOVERNment to control the manifold and terrifying threats posed by today's and tomorrow's technology is an implicit theme of *Oryx and Crake*. Government is almost invisible in the novel except as an extension of business. There are no courts or regulatory bodies, and even the omnipresent security organ, the "Corp[orate]Se[curity]Corps," seems not to be a public agency. The Greens, as a potential counterweight to irresponsible capitalist enterprise, filling a gap created by the attenuation of government, are depicted as hopeless. In futile protest against a new genetically modified coffee ("Happicuppa") that is putting small coffee growers out of business, "a

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Boston Coffee Party sprang up."

> There was a staged media event, boring because there was no violence—only a bunch of balding guys with retro tattoos or white patches where they'd been taken off, and severe-looking baggy-boobed women, and quite a few overweight or spindly members of marginal, earnest religious groups, in T-shirts with smiley-faced angels flying with birds or Jesus holding hands with a peasant or God Is Green on the front. They were filmed dumping Happicuppa products into the harbour, but none of the boxes sank. So there was the Happicuppa logo, lots of copies of it, bobbing around on the screen. It could have been a commercial.

So Atwood is not an orthodox liberal. The herbivorous Crakers are a parody of the liberal conception of unspoiled human nature; the vegan who burns Jimmy's imitation-leather shoes is one of the targets of her satire; and the atheist intellectual is put on a par with the soulless corporation as a menace to humanity. Social conservatives will relish Atwood's association of pornography (in which the future is awash) with moral decay. Yet her focus remains steadily on extinction, not on decay; nor is it clear that Crake's moral deformity is a product of his culture. There have always been Crakes; only now they are much more dangerous, and there are more of them. And the more scientific brainpower that is deployed to fight them, the more scientists there will be who, like Crake, know how to use technology to commit terrorist acts of appalling magnitude.

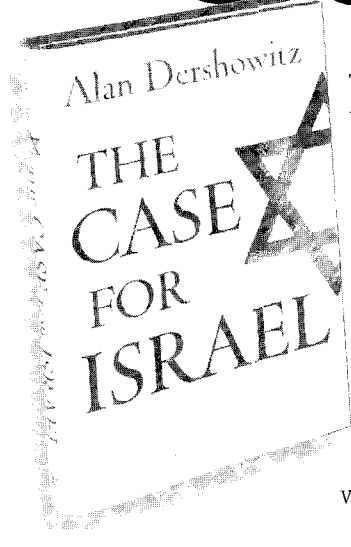
Atwood probably is right to treat biological terrorism, even of the one-man variety illustrated by Crake's concealing an Ebola-like pathogen in a popular new happiness pill, as a greater threat to humanity than the continued proliferation of nuclear weapons. Nevil Shute was wrong in *On the Beach*: even an all-out nuclear war, though it would kill millions and even hundreds of millions of people, would be unlikely to extinguish the race. But a synthesized or genetically modified germ just might. True, Atwood slights the fact that the more lethal a germ is, the more likely it is to kill its host before the host infects anyone else, while the slower it is to act, the more time there is to find an antidote. Yet one can imagine a new, lethal virus that would be more contagious than HIV (because airborne), but that like HIV would have a long infectious incubation period (the period during which a carrier, though still asymptomatic, can infect others). In such circumstances, the entire human population might be infected before the new virus was discovered, let alone an antidote or a cure developed. One might think that if such viruses were possible, evolution would have produced them already; but evolution by means of natural selection has design limitations—it has yet to produce an animal with wheels, for example—that science can overcome. Reducing the risk of biological terrorism to an acceptable level may require the abolition of all privacy rights and most other civil liberties as well—another example of the very high cost of controlling the hazardous side effects of modern technology.

I HAVE SAID THAT OUR CURRENT ERA of global free-market competition might seem a libertarian's dream. But libertarians can be realists, too, and so here is an assessment by David D. Friedman, a prominent libertarian economist who began his professional life as a physicist:

> The next century or so is radically uncertain, with plausible outcomes ranging from the extermination of our species to the conversion of humans to more or less immortal near-gods. But it isn't clear that increasing "regulation" makes the adverse outcomes less likely or the good outcomes more. We don't have a decent mechanism for centralized control on anything like the necessary scale. What is true is that our decentralized mechanisms, which work well on a large scale, depend on a world where there is some workable definition of property rights in which the actions that a person takes with his property have only slight external effects, beyond those that can be handled by contract. Technological progress might mean that no such definition exists—in which case we are left with zero workable solutions to the coordination problem.

So Margaret Atwood's pessimism is not a mere literary flourish. It probably will not be taken seriously, though—nor,

Not Guilty.



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for that matter, will Martin Rees's bleak book, despite its lucidity and its author's imposing credentials—because of the terrible record of prophets of doom, both fictional and ostensibly factual. The former can be "saved" by treating future-catastrophe fiction as satire aimed at the author's own society, with the future setting serving as a literary convention, or by treating it as warning rather than as sober prediction. Yet it is evident that Wells, Huxley, Orwell, and others in the literary tradition had a very imperfect handle on the future, and Atwood's gift of prophecy may be no better. The survival of their novels and hers may depend on their literary merit rather than on their social insight.

The abysmal predictive records of "serious" scientific doomsayers, such as Paul Ehrlich, the Stanford biologist who at the time of the first "Earth Day" in 1970 made a rash of quickly falsified predictions concerning worldwide famine, lethal water pollution, human life expectancy, and even sport fishing, are a problem of a different order. Their incessant crying wolf has made it difficult to convince people to take seriously the threat that the uncontrolled progress of technology poses to human civilization and even survival. Yet it is not a negligible threat, as Atwood's novel can help us feel. Science and technology are moving rapidly to a point at which nations, gangs, and even individuals will be able to wield destructive forces of unprecedented lethality, and innocent activities will have equally lethal if unintended potential, all in a context of international anarchy.

The mistake of Atwood's novelistic predecessors (and of Ehrlich, too) was to ignore the fact that problems beget solutions. Some harmful trends are self-correcting; others are stoppable by determined collective action. But no longer can such observations be of much comfort. It is increasingly difficult to imagine feasible solutions to the problems created by the scientific-technological juggernaut—the problems dramatized by *Oryx and Crake*. We must not forget that it is in the nature of prophecies of doom that all but the last are falsified. ■

Alan Wolfe

Cross Purposes

A People Adrift: The Crisis of the Roman Catholic Church in America
By Peter Steinfels
(Simon and Schuster, 392 pp., $26)

I.

The past fifty years have witnessed more change in the cultural life of the nation than any previous half-century in American history. In the early 1950s, Americans were a fearful people, convinced that their way of life was under attack by Communists at home and abroad. Sexually conventional, they upheld the nuclear family as the gold standard of domestic arrangements and allowed considerable censorship of their popular entertainment. Authority was respected; leadership was trusted. Especially prized were neighborhoods, if for no other reason than an ethnic and racial homogeneity that kept minority groups out. Dissent, if that is what it could be called, rarely took the form of political commitment; it was more likely to be expressed as existential withdrawal and personal angst.

That America now seems like ancient times, especially to those trying, as I frequently do in my classes, to bring it to life for the benefit of college students born after Ronald Reagan became president. What happened, one wonders, to have produced a country in which authority is so frequently questioned, diverse ways of life are so willingly tolerated, nightly television knows no boundaries when it comes to sex and violence, women demand full equality with men, there are no agreed-upon rules for proper moral conduct, and social critics, instead of blaming our troubles on conformity, complain that Americans have become too individualistic for their own good? There are many answers, but one is worthy of far more attention than it has received: American Catholicism changed.

When it comes to religion, liberals and conservatives are in pretty much the same place now as they were fifty years ago. As the Cold War began, secular Americans, Reform Jews, and mainline Protestants were already uncomfortable with a public piety that expressed its values as God's revealed truths. On the other side of the spectrum, there has also been relatively little change among conservative Protestants. To be sure, they were politically disengaged in the 1950s in comparison with their remarkably successful activism today, but their beliefs in both eras emphasized the necessity of born-again conversion to experience the full blessings of Jesus's grace.

Compared with both groups, contemporary American Catholics have experienced a sea change in attitude. The cultural conservatism of the 1950s was indistinguishable from the public posture of the church. The Jesuit Edmund Walsh of Georgetown University fed Joseph McCarthy the idea for his anti-Communist mania. Catholics in those days still had ties to what they called "captive nations," and they were second to none in their Cold War fervor. Hollywood censorship was organized in close collaboration with church officials. Bishop Fulton J. Sheen was a fixture on television, advising Americans about sin, temptation, and holiness. Never having fully recovered from the radio rantings of Father Coughlin, widespread canards about Christ killers, and a pope who was decidedly unfriendly to European Jews, Catholics—no matter how much discrimination they endured at the hands of Protestants—were among the more anti-Semitic of American Christians. The idea of starting the conservative magazine *National Review* came from a Catholic named William F. Buckley Jr., although to his everlasting credit Buckley removed the anti-Semites from his enterprise. Even when Catholics voted Democratic, as most of them did, their liberalism was only of the economic sort—it was rarely cultural and moral.

One will not find a disproportionate number of Catholics leading the fight for abortion rights in contemporary America. Nor, to the unending delight of Karl Rove, are Catholics the reliable Democratic voters that they once were. Still, American Catholics—with the possible but significant exception of Hispanics—live worlds apart from the morality of their parents and their grandparents. By margins of eight or nine to one, they simply ignore Rome's teachings on birth control. Sixty percent of contemporary

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American Catholics support the ordination of women as priests, and even those who do not typically attend masses in which women play prominent roles that were once denied to them. Since John F. Kennedy's famous Houston speech, American Catholic politicians accept as a matter of course the same separation of church and state that the church, throughout most of its history, has abhorred. Not even in the most right-wing of contemporary Catholic circles today can one hear the suspicion of Jews that I routinely experienced growing up one neighborhood over from ordinary Italian and Irish kids in Philadelphia. Some Catholics question capital punishment, and a smaller (but often very visible) number of others protest against the use of American military power. In 1986, a letter written by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger seemed to soften the church's firm opposition to homosexuality, although the recent Vatican pronouncement instructing Catholic politicians to resist gay marriage suggests the severe limits to liberalization on that issue. And of course Catholics are no longer likely to defer to priestly authority, especially when they have reason to believe that their priests might be involved in sinful acts that they themselves would never contemplate.

As contemporary Catholicism goes, in other words, so goes contemporary America. The event that drove this truth home was the pedophilia crisis that came to light in Boston last year: what would once have been a local story quickly became a national one, as Americans of all faiths expressed their shock at the hierarchy's misdeeds and their sympathy for the victims. The crisis of 2002 is likely to be remembered as the most important event in American Catholic history. And yet there is a way in which focusing on the crisis shifts attention away from the changes in American Catholic life that had already been put in place before Cardinal Bernard Law tried to cover up the crimes of wayward priests. We should not dismiss the crisis, but we should keep our eye also on the larger picture of what has been happening to Europe's most significant import to the United States.

One reason Catholics do so much to define America is that so many of those who make the definition of America their career—I am speaking of journalists—are Catholic. As befits the sociological transformation of American Catholicism, moreover, the best known of them are not flacks writing apologetics in parish magazines that defend the one true faith; they are among the most individual and even idiosyncratic commentators in the country. Peter Steinfels, who writes the "Beliefs" column for *The New York Times,* is somewhat singular, for unlike E. J. Dionne, Tim Russert, Cokie Roberts, Mark Shields, Chris Matthews, or the late Michael Kelly, he makes religion and not politics his beat. But he shares with them a sensibility that cannot easily be fit into the convenient labels of "liberal" and "conservative." At one point in his new book, Steinfels writes that Catholics are the quintessential swing voters. For similar reasons, Catholic writers tend to be swing journalists. The way they lean a bit to the right on moral issues and a bit to the left on economic ones goes a long way toward defining where the American political center is at any given time.

On one level, Steinfels's book is a kind of *Catholicism for Dummies,* an attempt to explain to the three-quarters of Americans who are not Catholic what the religion is. (One suspects that considerable numbers of Catholics these days, especially among the young, could also benefit from such a primer.) Steinfels informs his readers that the United States is divided into one hundred seventy-seven dioceses of the Latin Rite (that is, those who view the pope as the head of their church). Thirty-one of them are large enough to be called "arch." The bishops who govern them are appointed by the pope, but as successors to the apostles they have considerable autonomy. Each diocese in turn is divided into parishes such that "virtually every square inch of inhabited American territory falls within the boundary of a Catholic parish." Crossing those lines are the major religious orders such as the Jesuits, the Franciscans, the Dominicans, and the Sisters of Mercy, plus a network of hospitals, charities, and fraternal organizations. If you have a question about Catholicism, Steinfels probably has answered it. Brothers, unlike priests, are not ordained, but like priests they take a vow of celibacy. The military has its own diocese. There are fifteen eparchies, the term for dioceses in places like Syria, Armenia, and Romania, where Catholic rites differ from those adopted in the Latin West.

Yet Steinfels is too opinionated to be content with a purely descriptive book.

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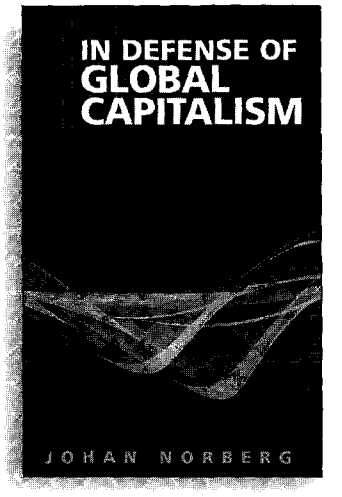

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He has a position; in fact, he has many positions, on issues ranging from the ordination of women (which, explicitly for deacons and implicitly for priests, he supports) to the celibacy requirement (which he would modify by ordaining some married clergy to officiate at the Eucharist, while reserving other tasks, such as confession, for the celibate). When all is said and done, Steinfels boils down his argument to three propositions. The first is that Catholicism is a wonderful faith worth preserving. The second is that it faces a serious crisis that began to emerge long before the Boston scandals. The third is that the crisis cannot be overcome either by edicts from Rome or by left-wing activism.

THE BEST THAT CATHOLICISM has to offer, in Steinfels's view, is embodied in the life and work of Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, the late archbishop of Chicago. Indeed, *A People Adrift* can be read as an elegy for the man. Three months before his death in November 1996, Bernardin announced his Common Ground Initiative to bring conservative and liberal Catholics closer together. Endorsed by Catholics with close ties to the Vatican such as Mary Ann Glendon and Michael Novak, along with pro-life Catholics such as federal judge John T. Noonan Jr. and former Pennsylvania governor Robert P. Casey, the initiative also included the feminist theologian Sister Elizabeth A. Johnson, the liberal archbishop of Milwaukee Rembert G. Weakland, and the labor leader John Sweeney.

Bernardin believed that too many matters of concern to all Catholics were not being addressed by the church, including questions about the morale of priests, the declining number of Catholic schools and people willing to teach in them, and the falloff in charitable contributions from members. Widely known for his integrity, he had formulated the consistent ethic of life linking opposition to abortion with opposition to capital punishment. The cardinal's efforts at bridging the gap that had opened up among the faithful illustrate one of Steinfels's major contentions: there is a Catholic ethic that runs orthogonal to America's liberal tradition (and the conservative reaction against it), and for that reason Catholicism enriches American moral life.

Despite the exemplary work of people such as Bernardin, Steinfels continues, the Catholic Church nonetheless faces a crisis. Roughly one in three Catholics attend Mass every Sunday, compared with 65 percent in 1965. The number of new priests ordained now is half what it was then. Instead of one priest for every eight hundred Catholics, we now have one for every nineteen hundred, and most of the priests are elderly. There are almost one hundred fewer Catholic colleges now than there were then. Fifteen thousand parish elementary schools have been reduced to seven thousand. But not all the numbers, Steinfels hastens to add, point downward. Although fewer Catholics attend Mass weekly (34 percent, down from 65 percent), almost twice as many of those who do attend receive Communion (90 percent). There are far more students attending the reduced number of Catholic colleges. And many of the truly negative downturns have begun to level off. Still, American Catholicism has a problem, even if it is not clear what it is or how it was caused.

Catholic traditionalists believe that they know the cause. In their view, Vatican II, by reforming the liturgy to make it more accessible to ordinary worshippers, adopted a form of religion designed mainly to make people feel good, thereby ruining religion's discomfiting mission of reminding people of their sins. "When I grew up you had two choices," Bishop Kenneth Untener of Saginaw, Michigan, once said. "Go to Mass ... or go to hell. Most of us chose Mass." But why go to Mass, traditionalists ask, if instead of Latin and incense you can see clowns entertaining children, listen to homilies attacking American foreign policy in Latin America, and hear folk music played on guitars? For traditionalists, Catholicism will continue to lose members unless it offers an alternative to the dominant culture.

A small but significant number of Catholics are returning to the Tridentine Latin Mass; indeed, a traditional Mass held at Rome's Santa Maria Maggiore Basilica in May 2003 (where Pius V, who introduced the Mass in the sixteenth century, is buried) was attended by Cardinal Law. Along similar lines, Thomas Monahan, the founder of Domino's Pizza, with the help of former baseball commissioner Bowie Kuhn, is financing the building of a traditional Catholic university in Florida. Conservative Catholics view the pedophilia scandal as the consequence of the church's failure to challenge the loose sexual morality of the 1960s and 1970s; and some of them believe that a significant number of seminaries and orders invited the scandal by encouraging homosexuality among the clergy. Many of the bishops appointed by the extremely conservative Pope John Paul II are traditionalists at heart. They see themselves in a holding pattern, stopping as best they can any new reforms until the glory days of Catholic triumphalism can be restored.

For liberals, the church's increasingly empty pews are the result of its failure to live up to Vatican II's promise of inclusion. It is not just that women are forbidden to participate in the church's most visible leadership role—and this at a time when the revival of religion in the United States is being led by female believers. The church's opposition to divorce, if taken literally, would instantly transform half of America's Catholic population into sinners. Young people are unfamiliar with Catholic theology, and no serious efforts are being made to reach out to them. The pedophilia scandal, in the view of many liberals, came close to Catholic business as usual: an all-male clergy, its arrogance fed by its distance from the concerns of real people, tried to limit its exposure by relying on tactics that would have worked in the 1950s, in the process completely failing to recognize that today's Catholics want institutions that are open to scrutiny and responsive to those whose financial contributions enable them to function.

TO HELP THE CHURCH HEAL itself, Steinfels tries to promote Bernardin's initiative by negotiating a road that avoids the ideological deadlines of Catholicism's much-noted polarization. To do so, he advocates a Catholicism that, while holding true to its core ethical beliefs, would learn more from experience, listen more to the suggestions of clergy at the forefront of pastoral practice, and rely less on abstract dogmas formulated by distant religious authorities than American Catholicism traditionally has. His suggestions for the Mass, to take one example, rely on the work of the aforementioned Bishop Untener. Politically liberal, Untener is liturgically conservative enough to resist reforms that amount to what he calls "a gimmick for each week." Instead, he has tried to preserve the centrality of the Sunday Eucharist by taping sermons, reviewing them with clergy, and suggesting reforms designed to answer the question of what

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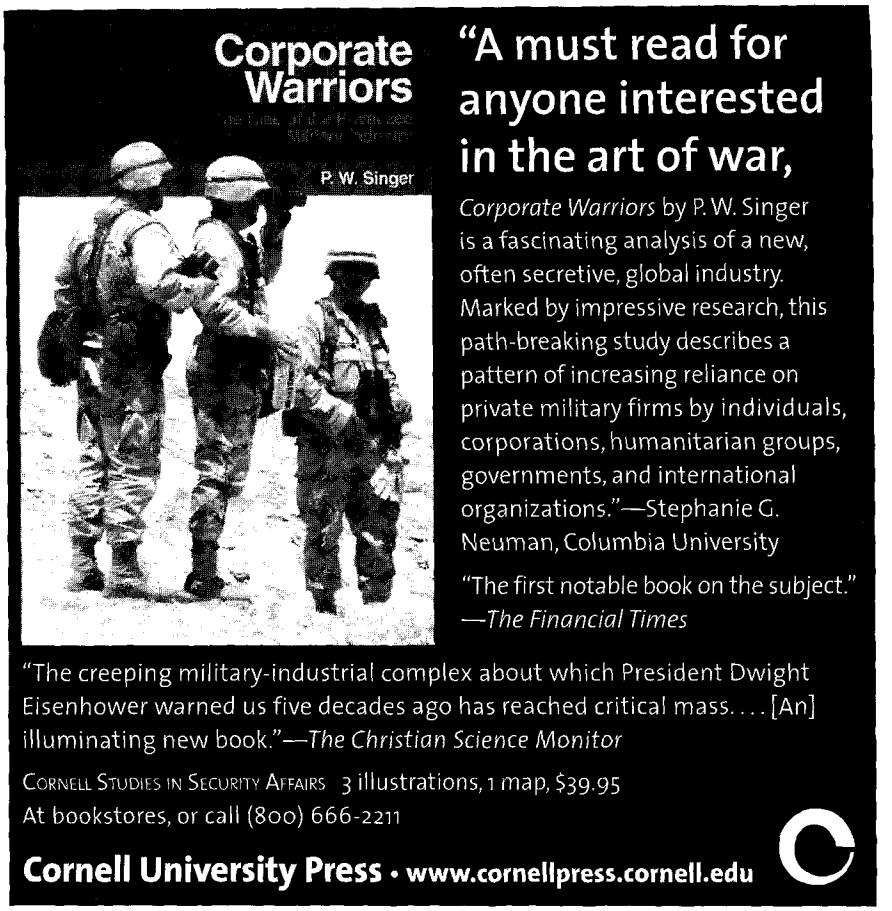
the Mass was trying to do at each point along the way. As Untener puts it, he and his colleagues do "what golfers do after a match. We compliment, console, offer tips, and try to figure out how we can preach better." Experimental and pragmatic, Untener's approach would not sit well with traditionalists who would be aghast at the idea that the liturgy can be improved like putting; but for Steinfels the important thing about Untener's approach is that it works, and so it addresses the spiritual needs of Catholics desperate for a church that speaks to them.

Typical of Steinfels's commonsense approach to Catholicism is his distinction between birth control and abortion. Non-Catholics, especially those who are sympathetic to liberal ideals of personal autonomy, are likely to lump together all the church's teachings on sexuality as representing a determined last stand against the modern world. But birth control, as Steinfels tells the story, does not touch directly on human life and is therefore not central to Catholic identity. True, he writes, Catholics are right to worry about a "contraceptive mentality" that ranks concerns about overpopulation over the miracle of birth; but by insisting that birth control—in the words of Father John A. Ryan, who was widely admired during the Great Depression for his liberal economic views—is "wrong in itself, always and everywhere, regardless of circumstances, conditions or effects," the church would declare as sinners couples who choose to limit the size of their families so as to ensure that their love for each other is not transformed into a demographic engine for the production of increasing numbers of Catholics.

ABORTION IS ANOTHER MATTER. Where matters of life and death begin, ideals of individual autonomy, in Steinfels's understanding of Catholic ethics, must end. Owing to its position on abortion, the church will never be fully at home in modern America—a prospect that does not bother Steinfels in the least. This is not a view that I share. Opposition to abortion in any and all circumstances strikes me as little different from opposition to birth control in any and all circumstances, for both policies ignore the real-life dilemmas faced by decent people who share a commitment to the priority of human life but who do not equate a just-formed fetus with a fully human person. But Steinfels makes a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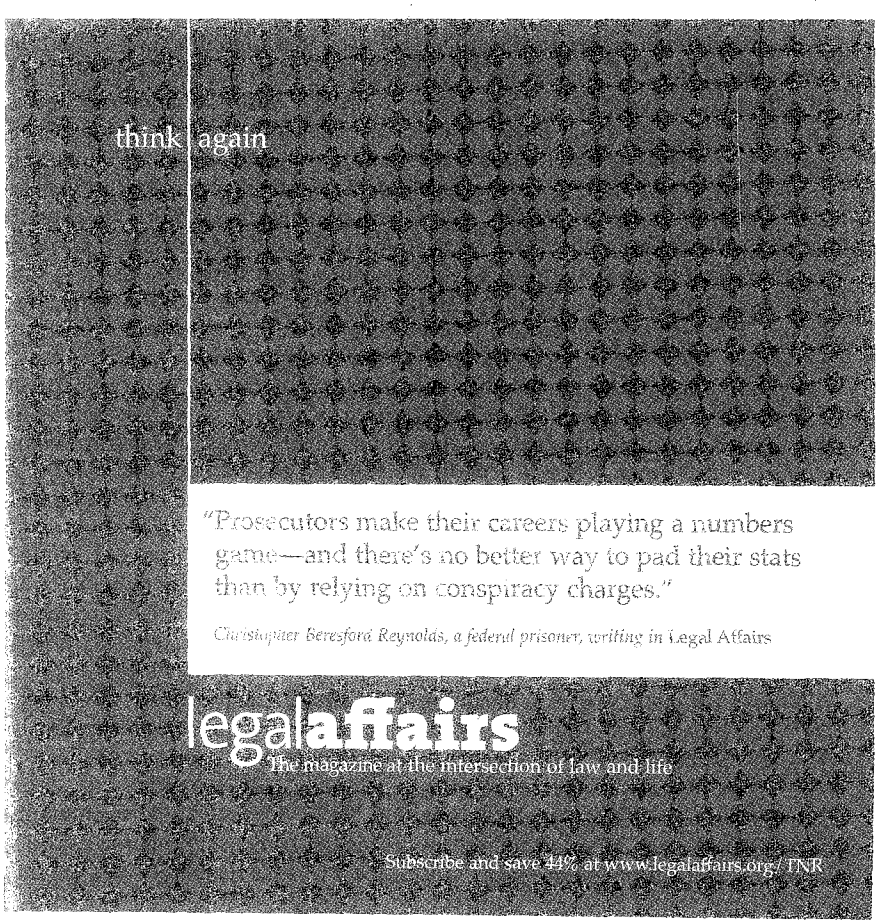
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compelling case, I think, that the Democratic Party's failure to stand up to abortion-on-demand purists—for example, by forbidding Robert Casey to speak to the Democratic National Convention in 1992—sent a message to Catholics that they were unwanted in America's more liberal political party. In the kind of flexibly principled Catholicism that Steinfels defends, it is possible to imagine the church some day revisiting its teachings on birth control, but about abortion it could never change its mind without throwing off a central component of its ethical reason for being.

II.

THE MODERATION AND THE heartfelt sincerity on display throughout Steinfels's book constitute, at least for this non-Catholic, an exceptionally persuasive defense of Catholicism as the church goes through its difficult days. I hope that Steinfels gets the kind of moderately pragmatic Catholic Church that he wants. But there is a significant obstacle. Catholicism's great enemy in contemporary America is not the anti-Catholic bigotry of our past. It is the Catholic Church's own way of doing business.

Steinfels's reverence toward Cardinal Bernardin makes it impossible not to admire the man, but despite Bernardin's efforts to reach out to all sides in the church, his initiative suffered a near-fatal wound, and the attacker was Cardinal Law. While not bordering on the criminal, as did his coverup of the acts of despicable priests, Law's treatment of the dying Bernardin was disgraceful in every detail. Dialogue was superfluous, Law thundered. There was no need for common ground, because Scripture and tradition provided all the ground that Catholics needed. Steinfels describes Law's broadside as "brutal." For a secretive man, Law made sure that his criticisms were as public as possible. His signal was picked up by other cardinals, who joined in the attack. It was as if the hierarchy wished to bury not only Bernardin's ideas but also his open and respectful way of arriving at them.

Steinfels wants his readers to admire the Catholic tradition. But which is the tradition, Bernardin or Law? As much as one wants to answer that it is both, Catholicism is, of all of America's religions, the most committed to embodying its truths in institutions, and Law, for all intents and purposes, controlled the only ones that mattered. True, he no longer controls them—proof, at least for the priestly, that it is better to die broken and honorable than to remain alive and disgraced. But Law resigned as Boston's archbishop to save the institution, not to change it. For less institutionally centered religions, it is possible to admire the spirituality while disparaging the bureaucracy. For Catholicism, the one is so closely linked to the other that such an approach is hard, and perhaps impossible. It is difficult to praise the church for its success in building a network of strong institutions and then turn around and criticize it when those institutions make self-defense a higher priority than spiritual integrity. One can hope that the institutions will change, but at least with respect to bishops and archbishops, nearly all of whom have been appointed by the present pope, little change can be expected for the foreseeable future.

FORTUNATELY, NOT ALL OF CATHolicism's institutions are ecclesiological. Quite properly, Steinfels devotes a substantial number of pages to one of Catholicism's most important, and most often neglected, stories: the building and staffing of its many hospitals. (For all the talk of faith-based initiatives in the Bush administration, Catholic hospitals are now, and have been for some time, the leading example of faith-based organizations receiving federal funds, primarily through Medicare and Medicaid.) But alas, Steinfels's discussion of this achievement demonstrates that Catholic identity can be weakened by institutions that are too flexible as much as it can by institutions that are too rigid.

Long before we had modern medicine, Steinfels writes, we had religious men and women—primarily women—who administered care and comfort to the victims of plague and war. Out of their efforts grew an imposing set of hospitals in every major American city staffed by Catholics with close diocesan connections. As in other arenas of modern life, the Vatican has not made it easy for these hospitals to succeed: in 1994, under pressure from traditionalists, the Vatican issued a set of guidelines forbidding sterilization (a less controversial issue than abortion) that complicated the efforts of Catholic hospitals to perform tubal ligations and other surgical procedures.

But a far greater burden on the Catholic hospital system has been imposed not by the church but by society. Modern hospital patients want more than care; they want cures. Miracles aside, religion does not have many cures to offer. Technology does. And the amount of technology any particular hospital can offer depends on how it manages its money. Conscious of the need to succeed in the marketplace, Catholic hospitals are no longer run by nuns but by experienced CEOs, many of them non-Catholic. And for this reason they are losing touch with their Catholic identity. Steinfels quotes Sister Patricia Vandenberg, who teaches hospital administration at Baldwin-Wallace College in Ohio: "If you expect someone to bear the heritage in the present moment, have it in their gut ... and transmit it to the next generation, you cannot realistically look to somebody who has not grown up in the heritage and is not ... sacramentally connected to the life of the church."

Neither Vandenberg's plaintive comment nor Steinfels's sympathy for her problem resolves the dilemma: the more Catholic hospitals become indistinguishable from other kinds of hospitals, the more Catholic lives are likely to be saved; while efforts to preserve the identity of Catholic hospitals could result in inferior health care that would not serve the church's reverence for life. "No one was willing to reject the real gains in medical outcome," Steinfels writes of a hospital no longer staffed primarily by nuns, "but no one could deny that something had been relinquished as well." The same could be said about the American League's approval of a designated hitter; change nearly always involves a combination of the good and the bad. The real question is whether Catholic hospitals offer something so valuable that society would be worse off if their specific religious identity were to disappear. There may be a positive answer to that question: a diverse society may want some hospitals where patients and their kin who oppose euthanasia can be guaranteed that it will not be practiced, even sub rosa, and Catholic hospitals can help fill such a need. But this is a far cry from the ambition of earlier generations of Catholics to create a parallel institutional universe. The Archdiocese of Boston is in trouble because it stands against the modern world. Catholic hospitals are in trouble, as least as distinctly Catholic institutions, because they have joined the modern world.

The same kind of dilemma, if involv-

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ing matters less acute than life and death, faces Catholic colleges and universities. Intent on restoring a specifically Catholic identity to these institutions, the Vatican in 1999 issued *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, which insisted that teachers of Catholic theology at Catholic colleges receive a *mandatum* from their local bishops certifying their competence. Cries of resistance could be heard from prominent Catholic theologians, and non-Catholics were immediately reminded of why it took so long for Catholic institutions to be accepted as committed to principles of academic freedom. Once again, the church seemed intent on looting its own crown jewels; it was as if the Vatican, uncomfortable with the great success of Catholic institutions of higher learning, wanted them to fail.

STEINFELS, WHO HAS A CONTRARian streak, thinks that the Vatican was correct to address the issue. He goes even further and suggests that Catholic colleges cannot ignore the religious views of all the faculty they hire. This does not mean quotas and litmus tests, he insists. And it certainly does not require a structure in which the Vatican sets unvarying rules that all institutions then follow, since what might be good for Notre Dame is not necessarily good for Gonzaga. But with sufficient flexibility and adroitness, a Catholic college can take steps to ensure that its faculty understand its mission and express at least some sympathy with it. The key, as always for Steinfels, is to look at what institutions do, not what they say. For all the talk about academic freedom, all institutions of higher education hire for mission as they understand it, and were Catholic colleges to take their identity more seriously, they would be doing what other places do when they hire specific kinds of literary scholars or chemists.

Steinfels describes *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* as "a rich source of ideas about university life and its intersection with Christian faith." Clearly he is trying to get people to stop focusing on the Vatican's rather impolitic call for mandates and instead to read the reflections that led to its instruction. But this is not so much contrarian as perverse: *Ex Corde* is important *only* because the Vatican wanted to assert its control over American colleges, even if, in leaving the implementation of the mandates up to local bishops, it absolved itself from a policing role. Yeshiva University and Calvin College, like Villanova or Santa Clara, struggle with the balance between religious identity and academic distinction, as Steinfels rightly points out, but they do not answer to a pope who thinks of himself as an educator, and who has the infallible authority to insist on his views.

The problem posed by *Ex Corde,* as it happened, never came to a boiling point, for the scandal of priestly pedophilia quickly overwhelmed the issue. When the American Catholic Bishops met in June 2002, the one thing every bishop could know for sure was that no one would ask him whether he planned to ask for mandates from the theologians in his diocese. Unwittingly, the pedophilia scandal produced exactly the kind of pragmatic experimentalism in the world of higher education that Steinfels admires more generally; the Vatican had spoken, but everything went on pretty much as if it had not.

III.

THE LONG-TERM QUESTION FACing American Catholics is whether they can ever expect to have a church as sincerely spiritual as they are. This is not the way it was supposed to be. Despite Luther's notion of a priesthood of all believers, most religions in general, and Catholicism in particular, have treated ordinary believers as so focused on this world that they require a clergy to direct their attention to the next. In American Catholicism these days, those relationships seem to have been reversed. It is the hierarchy that finds itself preoccupied with such worldly matters as lawsuits, unbalanced budgets, diocesan downsizing, and political stonewalling, while ordinary parishioners have taken the lead in holding the church to its spiritual mission.

Members of an institutional religion, Catholics might be expected to wait for change to come from above. If they do, they are likely to be disappointed. The incumbent pope no doubt has many virtues, but sharing the pain of ordinary believers in Milwaukee or Detroit is not one of them. Indeed, not only is John Paul II decidedly unlike the empathic former president of the United States, he bears a striking resemblance to the present no-nonsense one. In both Rome and Washington we find administrations secretive to the point of obsession, certain that history is on their side, given to asserting authority through execu-

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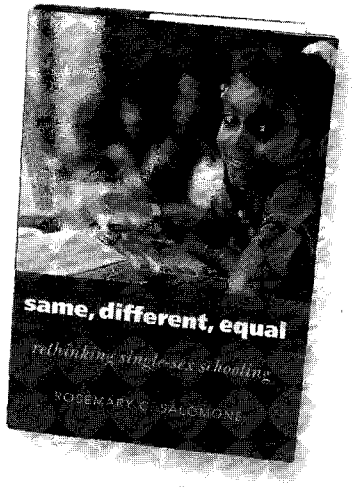

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tive pronouncements, archly conservative in morality, and intolerant of dissent. But Bush is responsible for what happens over four to eight years, after which the American laity, if you will, can freely replace him with a leader more to its liking. The pope has almost two thousand years before him and an uncountable number of years ahead of him. As far as anyone can tell, he views his legacy as one that would make as few concessions as possible to precisely the demands for greater accountability that American Catholics are making.

THE PICTURE LOOKS QUITE DIFferent, though, if one regards it from the bottom up. The most important pages in Steinfels's book are devoted to showing—who comes up with book titles these days?—that American Catholics are not really adrift at all. In one important sense they have already taken the future of their church into their own hands: there have begun to emerge what Steinfels calls "lay parish ministers." He estimates that there are now thirty thousand people, 80 percent of them women, who are paid to work in such activities as religious education, youth ministry, and parish liturgy. By 1997, the number of lay ministers had surpassed the number of parish priests. Despite the church's hierarchical structure, moreover, these lay ministers are appointed by church pastors, not by bishops. Steinfels is right to insist on the importance of this development. Theologically speaking, many of the differences between Protestants and Catholics have been disappearing over the past century. In 1998, for example, Lutherans and Catholics reconciled a four-hundred-year dispute over whether faith or deeds constitute a precondition for salvation. Steinfels's point about lay ministry suggests an even more stunning correspondence between Catholicism and Protestantism: organizationally, the former is beginning to resemble the more congregationally based nature of the latter.

This does not mean that American Catholicism will become a democratic religion, and it certainly should not be viewed as the sign of a future schism between American Catholicism and the Vatican. But neither is it likely that the Vatican will start ordering all American bishops to nip this movement in the bud; the shortage of priests is too severe, and the distrust of the hierarchy is too great, for even the most conservative forces in Rome to take that step. More likely are scenarios in which negotiations between church authorities and lay activists find the proper divisions of labor so that each can live with the other. Yet that in itself would represent an enormous change for a church that has for some time not been used to sharing authority. (But not always: as the historian Jay Dolan has pointed out, the Catholic Church in eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century America, geographically distant from Rome, had considerable autonomy to shape its own destiny.) Other religions—Jews in the past, Muslims in the future—have adopted and will adopt American ways of doing business while remaining distinctive. Catholicism began that process in eighteenth-century America and will have to re-discover it again in twenty-first-century America.

All this suggests that Steinfels's call for flexibility and pragmatism is not as utopian as someone familiar only with the American Catholicism of the 1950s might believe. Rome can help or Rome can hinder, but what will happen to American Catholicism will, to a significant degree, be independent of either Roman course. If the result is an American Catholicism that comes to embody the spirituality of Cardinal Bernardin more than the bureaucracy of Cardinal Law, then Peter Steinfels will be vindicated—and so, too, will the overwhelming majority of American Catholic believers. ■

Michael B. Oren
Road Maps

SUPPORT ANY FRIEND: KENNEDY'S MIDDLE EAST AND THE MAKING OF THE U.S.-ISRAEL ALLIANCE
By Warren Bass
(Oxford University Press, 336 pp., $30)

IMAGINE A FETCHING YOUNG PRESIdent who takes office and tries to transform America's Middle East policies, tackling instead of sidestepping the Palestinian problem, not distancing but embracing the Israelis, wooing rather than resisting Arab radicals. And imagine a president who strives to achieve these goals at the very moment the Middle East becomes the focus of a vicious global struggle. The man who immediately comes to mind is Bill Clinton, but the image of an earlier president might also be conjured.

More than thirty years before Clinton sought to find a solution for Palestine, to thaw American-Israeli relations out of the deep freeze of the Bush years, and to make Yasir Arafat his most frequent foreign guest, John F. Kennedy wrestled with the refugee issue, reversed his predecessor's coolness toward Israel, and proffered friendship to Gamal Abdel Nasser, the president of Egypt and the leading Arab revolutionary of his day. Moreover, just as Clinton aimed at accomplishing all of this while confronting the international threat of terrorism emanating from the Middle East, so, too, did Kennedy seek to bring peace and stability to the region just as it became a battlefield in the Cold War.

But in contrast to Clinton's sojourn into Middle East diplomacy, which has been extensively documented by the press and in the memoirs of those involved in it, Kennedy's record has remained obscure. Apart from fleeting references by Kennedy biographers and a few scholarly articles, the subject has been roundly ignored—until now. In his groundbreaking and engaging book, Warren Bass introduces us to a Kennedy whom few people in America and in the Middle East ever knew or even imagined existed.

Assuming the presidency in January 1961, Kennedy inherited a Middle East policy in shambles. Bass catalogues the failures wrought by the Eisenhower years: the disintegration of pro-Western Middle East defense organizations and the Soviets' successful entrenchment in the Arab heartland; undisguised strains in the American-Israeli relationship;

Michael B. Oren is a senior fellow at The Shalem Center in Jerusalem and the author most recently of SIX DAYS OF WAR: JUNE 1967 AND THE MAKING OF THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST *(Oxford University Press).*

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America's inability to fill the vacuum left by the collapse of Anglo-French power in the area—a collapse that Eisenhower himself helped to precipitate in the Suez crisis. Nasser, the most charismatic and influential figure in modern Arab history, who had seized control in Cairo with the CIA's assistance, had become America's most implacable foe. The same CIA was now reduced to monitoring Nasser's alliance with Moscow and to seeking what we now call "regime change" in Egypt by all means short of assassination.

INTO THIS MORASS STRODE KENnedy, a man who, though short of foreign policy experience, had a relatively broad familiarity with the Middle East. "I have never seen two groups more unwilling to try and work out a solution that has some hope of success," he wrote home in 1939 after witnessing Arab-Jewish fighting in Palestine, and recommended partitioning the country into separate Arab and Jewish states. In 1951, on a second visit to the region, he described the soldiers of the newly created Jewish state as "tough, rugged, cocky," and praised the Israelis' "sense of dedication ... [their] willingness to endure hardship." Noting the Arabs' fear of Israeli expansionism, the future president nevertheless concluded that "the true enemy of the Arab world is poverty and want."

Sloughing off the anti-Semitism that cloaked his father's worldview, Kennedy had cultivated the Jewish vote as a young congressman, and supported economic aid for Israel (a "shield of democracy," he called it, and a "sword of freedom"), and denounced Eisenhower's supposedly pro-Arab policies. He often likened American Jewry's quest for acceptance in America with his own lot as an Irish Catholic. And Jewish ballots indeed proved pivotal in Kennedy's neck-and-neck presidential race with Nixon in 1960. Jews who had been all but boycotted by Eisenhower's administration were appointed to senior advisory and Cabinet positions in Kennedy's new government. The New Frontier was poised to become the ally that Israel had always sought in the United States: the supplier of advanced weaponry and a guaranteed defense against Arab attack.

Still, for all his sympathy for Jews and Israel, Kennedy was also sensitive to the Arabs' point of view, to their need for dignity and liberation. As a senator in the late 1950s, he backed Algeria's struggle for independence from France. When he entered the White House, he reached out to the Arab nationalist regimes formerly dismissed by Eisenhower as hostile. "More energy is released by the awakening of these new nations than by the fission of the atom itself," he declared on one occasion, and on another that "the Middle East needs water, not war—tractors, not tanks—bread, not bombs." Affection for Israel never deterred Kennedy from naming as his secretary of state Dean Rusk, an opponent of Israel's creation in 1948 and a subsequent critic of its policies, or working closely with the State Department, which was hardly a hotbed of Zionism. Kennedy came to office prepared, as Bass's title quotes him, to "support any friend," Arab or Jew.

Though it never articulated its Middle Eastern objectives explicitly, the Kennedy administration aspired to four goals in its policy. The first was to wean Nasser—known as "Mr. Big" in Camelot—from Soviet aid and to convince him to "forsake the microphone for the bulldozer," to focus on domestic rather than regional issues. While pampering Nasser, the United States would also shore up its major Arab allies, the Jordanians and the Saudis, and reassure the Israelis of America's steadfast, if understated, support. Next, the White House sought to curtail the arms race in the Middle East and to safeguard the area from nuclear proliferation. Finally—as if all the above were not ambitious enough—Kennedy wanted to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, beginning with what he regarded as its core: the Palestinian refugee issue.

A fine line always separates vision from hubris. Kennedy's hubris seems to have blinded him not only to the possibility that none of these goals was achievable in the Middle East of his time, but also that all of them together would prove mutually incompatible. That incompatibility was scarcely evident in 1961. No sooner was he installed in the Oval Office than Kennedy initiated an unprecedented and surprisingly warm correspondence with Nasser. "I want to be certain that you and other Arab leaders have no misunderstanding of our attitude towards the Arab people," the president wrote to Nasser in November, and praised his dedication and statesmanship. Egypt's leader in turn thanked Kennedy for his "appreciation of the problems of the countries aspiring to progress," and assured him that "mutual understanding will keep those differences between limits that will not be exceeded." Soon American economic aid to Egypt doubled to $500 million, much of it in the form of wheat that fed nearly half the country's population. A state visit for Nasser was planned, complete with White House banquets and a coast-to-coast helicopter tour. ("New York will be avoided," Rusk noted dourly.) Nasser's speeches, infamous for their anti-American invective, grew almost anodyne. "We've made a score on relations with the key guy in the Arab world," trumpeted an internal National Security Council memo. "Let's keep nurturing it."

The newfound friendship was evident at the end of 1961, when Syria seceded from its union with Egypt, leaving Nasser vulnerable to ridicule from his arch-rivals in Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Washington pressured the monarchies to go easy on Nasser—to give him "a soft landing," in Bass's words—and not to compound his humiliation. The White House also warned the Israelis against exploiting the inter-Arab crisis to conquer the West Bank, at the same time working to establish a fresh rapport with the Jewish state. On May 30, Kennedy became the first American president to meet with an Israeli prime minister, the pugnacious David Ben-Gurion.

THE MEETING, WHICH WAS NOT official, took place at the Waldorf-Astoria. The conversation dealt exclusively with state matters. "If they [the Arabs] should defeat us, they would do to the Jews what Hitler did," Ben-Gurion began, and stressed Egypt's centrality to issues of war and peace: "All questions in the Middle East depend on Nasser." To counter the Egyptian threat, the Israeli leader wanted American-made planes and tanks and especially Hawk anti-aircraft missiles, but Kennedy would only promise to keep the requests "under review." Instead of dwelling on Israel's security

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needs, Kennedy rapidly proceeded to express his personal concerns about nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. American inspectors had recently concluded that Israel's reactor at Dimona was intended for peaceful purposes only, but the still-suspicious president demanded additional visits. "A woman should not only be virtuous but also have the appearance of virtue," Kennedy explained. "We must take away any excuse for the argument that what you are doing is connected with the proliferation of nuclear arms."

Ben-Gurion in the end agreed to more inspections, and also to Kennedy's idea of re-activating the efforts of the United Nations to rectify the Palestinian problem. Here was the president's furthest-reaching scheme, offering the refugees the choice between repatriation to Israel or compensation for lost property, with the understanding that the overwhelming majority would opt for the latter. Ben-Gurion was pessimistic about the plan's chances for success, but he conceded that it was "worth trying."

BY THE BEGINNING OF 1962, Kennedy and his advisers had every reason to celebrate a complete turnaround in America's Middle Eastern fortunes. Nasser had been mollified, the Saudis and the Jordanians curbed, the Israelis both comforted and contained. Its attachment to American Jews notwithstanding, the administration was establishing a reputation for evenhandedness in a conflict that it hoped soon to resolve. The region seemed to provide a rare interlude of relief from the Cold War, whose tensions stretched from Havana to Hanoi. But then, suddenly and inexorably, the policy fell apart.

Several factors contributed to its collapse, as Bass ably documents. Among them was Nasser's decision to develop surface-to-surface missiles—relatively primitive devices designed by former Nazi scientists, but, when combined with Soviet-supplied bombers, sufficient to tip the regional balance of power. Kennedy realized that he could not deny Israel its nuclear deterrent and withhold American guarantees for its security, because Israel would strike Egypt pre-emptively before Egypt reached its offensive potential. But he also knew that to leave Dimona unchecked was to invite an Arab first strike against Israel. The answer was to accede to Ben-Gurion's request for the Hawks, departing from long-standing American policy of selling Israel only small, defensive weapons. At $27 million per battery, the sale netted prodigious profits for the Hawks' manufacturer, but also Arab anger at Kennedy. The Egyptian press seethed, accusing the president of "shedding Arab blood."

To limit the damage, Kennedy launched a secret initiative to eliminate all missiles from the Middle East. "The arms race holds the seeds of disaster ... for all of us," he admonished Egypt's leader, and then prodded him: "Israel could have the capability to develop nuclear weapons in the next few years." But the logic of first selling Hawks to his enemy and then seeking to remove them eluded Nasser, who claimed that inspections of his missile sites would make Egypt look like an American protectorate. Ben-Gurion, for his part, thanked Kennedy for the Hawks, but went on to insist that "this defensive weapon alone cannot serve as a deterrent to our neighbors ... whose offensive potential cannot be reduced by the Hawk," and to renew his request for tanks and jets. "The Hawks," Bass concludes, "were harbingers."

A similar fate befell Kennedy's peace efforts. Ben-Gurion feared that the Arab states would insist on repatriating all of the refugees in order to undermine Israel's Jewish majority. "I can conceive of no practical plan which will bring about a settlement of the refugee problem in the near future as long as the Arab rulers are planning the destruction of Israel," he cabled Kennedy in August 1962. "There is only one way to resolve the refugee question, and that is for the Arab rulers ... to reconcile themselves both inwardly and publicly to the existence of the State of Israel." Nasser initially expressed guarded interest in any formula to replace "the basic Zionist concept" with a "binational state," but opposed putting a ceiling on the number of refugees repatriated. In August, citing Arab charges that he was already "too soft" on Palestine, he rejected the plan entirely.

Next to fail was Kennedy's attempt to scrutinize Israel's nuclear program, as the president's understanding of "inspections"—unannounced, unrestricted visits by foreign experts—scarcely accorded with Ben-Gurion's view of it. In demanding tight controls on the inspectors, the Israeli leader cited the "actual danger now confronting us ... destructive 'conventional' weapons in the hands of neighboring governments which openly proclaim their intention to attempt the annihilation of Israel." Ben-Gurion's position infuriated Kennedy, who, Bass writes, "went nuclear (figuratively) to prevent Ben-Gurion from going nuclear (literally)." Twice in May 1963, the president warned Jerusalem that "this Government's commitment to and support of Israel could be seriously jeopardized if it should be thought that we were unable to obtain reliable information on a subject as vital to peace as the question of the character of Israel's effort in the nuclear field." Intended to twist Ben-Gurion's arm, Kennedy's tactics actually helped to break it; buckling under domestic political pressures, the prime minister resigned. Levi Eshkol, his subtler successor, understood that Israel could assuage Kennedy and still conceal whatever it needed concealed. The inspections proceeded, but so did Israel's nuclearization.

KENNEDY'S HOPES FOR A NEW beginning in the Middle East ended where they began, with Nasser. It started in Yemen, where, in the fall of 1962, a radical clique of officers seized power from the traditional imam. Nasser backed the junta while the Saudis upheld the imam, and soon Egyptian troops and planes were bombing Saudi bases, sometimes with poison gas. "I don't even know where it [Yemen] is," Kennedy admitted when told of the imbroglio; nor, preoccupied with the crisis in Cuba, could he effectively intervene to stop the fighting. Fearing an Egyptian victory in the Gulf, he approved a top-secret operation, codenamed Hard Surface, that sent American fighter jets to defend Saudi airspace and, if required, to destroy any intruders. Kennedy warned Nasser of the "real risk that events might lead to a collision involving the interests of our two countries," and cautioned his staff, "Be sure no war starts that I'm not in control of."

War was indeed a possibility, but Kennedy remained loath to alienate Nasser entirely. In spite of Egypt's open support for Castro, and though his indulgence of Egypt's dictator drove America's Jordanian and Saudi allies—no less than the Israelis—to distraction, Kennedy sought any means of extricating Nasser from the Yemeni mess. In the spring of 1963, American mediation secured an

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agreement for a simultaneous withdrawal of Egyptian and Saudi forces. Riyadh complied; Cairo did not. At the same time pro-Nasserist riots broke out in Jordan, where Egypt's long-range radio called on all "free valiant men" to overthrow "the dwarf," King Hussein.

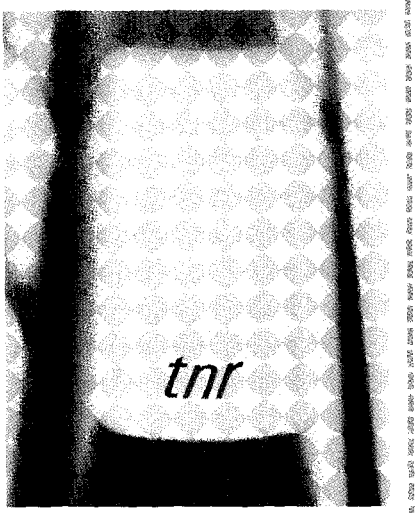
An increasingly despondent Kennedy again wielded Israel as a weapon with which to intimidate Nasser: "A major conflict might ensue [in the West Bank]—and one in which our assessment indicates that the Arab forces might not be at any advantage." But still the president strove to sound conciliatory: "We want to steer an even course with all of our friends, and we hope it will not be made unduly difficult for us." While considering additional aid for Egypt, the administration conditioned its entire package on Nasser's cooperation in the Gulf. "The carrot that Washington had originally offered to lure Egypt out of the Soviet camp," Bass observers, was now "a stick to drive Egypt out of Yemen."

By November 1963, Kennedy could see a Middle Eastern political landscape every bit as devastated as that of 1960. America's overtures to Nasser had backfired, the State Department believed, and his goals remained "the reduction of U.S. influence in the area, the elimination of the Jordanian and the Saudi regimes ... and, eventually, a reckoning with Israel." Reverting to his old rhetoric, the Egyptian leader again declared that "disarmament must be preceded by the liquidation of imperialism and the liquidation of all traces of imperialism." While Saudi Arabia embarked on a scurrilous campaign to forbid American Jewish soldiers from serving on its soil, Egyptian propaganda clamored about Jews—"enemies of God"—borne by American aircraft to Mecca. Meanwhile, the Senate, in a bold rebuke of Kennedy's policy, voted to withhold aid to Egypt as long as Egypt threatened America's allies. The president warned Nasser that his actions were "inevitably complicating, not least in the Congress, my own effort toward ... friendly collaboration." It was his last communication with Cairo.

KENNEDY'S MIDDLE EAST POLICIES had clearly failed. There is always the temptation to wonder whether, had he lived, he might still have benefited the region and helped it to avert more grievous catastrophes to come. The answer may lie in the few protocols of White House discussions supplied by Bass. These reveal a deeper, more nuanced Kennedy than his Middle Eastern record might reflect. At a meeting in the summer of 1962, Kennedy questions the prudence of his own peace initiative: "Why isn't the status quo more preferable for both the Israelis and the Arabs? We pay the bill [for the refugees], and there is no compromise of principle." The doubts resurface two weeks later, when the president again asks: "Isn't one group going to be horribly disappointed—either the Israelis by a lot more than one out of ten [refugees] coming back, or by the Arabs when only one out of ten wants to go back? Isn't it going to blow up...?" Here was a man who, awakening from an initial naïveté, could now confront Middle East realities—a man who, though still willing to "support any friend," had learned who his friends were.

But that knowledge would never be applied. News of Kennedy's assassination was greeted in the Arab world not only with expressions of sorrow, but also with rumors that the assassins were Zionists. Tellingly, the only lasting memorial to Kennedy in the Middle East, Yad Kennedy, was built in Israel in a forest outside Jerusalem. Kennedy's legacy in the region was all but forgotten by subsequent presidents, including Bill Clinton, a man who aspired to many of the same goals only to make many of the same mistakes.

Bass's book has its flaws. Arranged topically rather than chronologically—the Waldorf meeting is discussed several times, each under a different heading (peace, arms, Dimona)—the narrative downplays the degree to which Kennedy addressed all these issues simultaneously and often at cross-purposes. Bass also overstates the role of the Hawks' sale in the advent of the strategic relationship between the United States and Israel. Kennedy expressly opposed such an alliance ("A bilateral security relationship ... would, I fear, have a distinct contrary effect," he wrote to Eshkol), and the missiles proved to be of little strategic value. They were fired just once, accidentally, during the Six Day War, and they downed an Israeli jet. And I must confess to irritation at Bass's stubborn insistence on calling Kennedy officials "New Frontiersmen," which seems to confuse McGeorge Bundy with Fess Parker. But such complaints are minor about a fine and illuminating book that handsomely earns its place as a standard work for the study of America in the Middle East. ■



Hot Button Issues

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Still

SARAH JESSICA PARKER HAS John Buridan's ass. Poor girl. Her show studies the modern problem of preference without choice, but she has discovered the medieval problem of choice without preference. In the issue of *Newsweek* that commemorates the anniversary of September 11, Little Miss Zeitgeist is asked to choose between "a pair of Manolos and a Kelly bag," and she replies, "Oh, well, that's like 'Sophie's Choice.' That's an impossible situation." This is what passes for smart in Manhattan now. So the tidings are good. The city has not fallen. The indomitable spirit of New York survives, and the evidence is the indomitable shallowness of certain New Yorkers. Insouciance is once more regarded as an expression of intelligence. Grinning in black, Daniel Libeskind, who makes logos out of atrocities, is the city's favorite son, and the lofty wrestle with the meaning of Ground Zero is more and more a debate between those who want 2,792 people to be buried beneath a theater and those who want 2,792 people to be buried beneath an opera house. Not for all, to be sure: There is a large underground of moral sense in Manhattan, and there are of course the boroughs, to which Manhattan looks for heroes and character actors. In those exiles from glamour, the population appears to be sagely unwilling or unable to enlist in the great American enterprise of moving on. They are not simple people, but they have been tutored by pain in the integrity of single-mindedness. Almost in a tone of surprise, *The New York Times* reports that "9/11 STILL STRAINS NEW YORK PSYCHE." Still? Two years are an American eternity.

LIKE THE SENSES, THE MEDIA LIVE IN an eternal present, though the similarity between the media and the senses ends abruptly there; and in this culture of sensationalism, in the ceaseless contemporaneity that is the media's debasement of time, it is hard to know how properly to conduct a commemoration. The other night I saw the films of the destruction again, and I was shocked that they are shocking still. So far these images have successfully resisted the rituals of familiarization. Belief is not yet keeping pace with knowledge: It is still difficult to believe what for two years we have known. Watching the towers burn again and fall again, I found myself without wisdom again. I was imprisoned in the inadequacy of my own resources. I wished to flee into private life and I wished to flee into public life. I hated history, because this is what it brings; and I loved history, because there is no other arena for action against this. I was seized by the Stoic temptation, and wandered through the house in a fog of futility and a fit of withdrawal, my mind disabled by this irrefutable demonstration of the fragility of life; and I was overcome by a rabidly political zeal, a tantrum of partiality, a perfectly condign vindictiveness in which only the sight of American soldiers in Kabul and Baghdad could give me comfort. (I remembered that other nations also suffer, and I forgot.) The little child asleep in his little room upstairs had everything to do with my reflection on the catastrophe, and nothing to do with it. I surrendered to feeling and I despised feeling. I needed ultimate truths and I needed breaking news. Everything that everybody was saying about September 11 made them look like fools, which made me look like a fool, too. But some of them really were fools. Nothing worked.

THERE WAS ANNA QUINDLEN PEDDLING her chocolate to Aaron Brown, teaching him that the lessons of September 11 "still ought to be personal," that the attack was not, "at some overarching level, about politics." It was, instead, "about all those people who were lost." For the attackers, of course, what transpired in New York and Washington was decidedly about politics, and at an exceedingly overarching level. But isn't America already tender enough? Is the common understanding of September 11 really wanting in pathos? Must the events of that obscene day have been "about" only one thing? For surely the important point is that we do not have a choice between the personal and the political. It is our duty to dwell in all the realms—in seasons of peace, because we are differentiated beings with differentiated commitments, but especially in seasons of war, when the abdication of our complexity would be disastrous. The full truth is that we have wounds and we have enemies. They are all, the wounds and the enemies, incontrovertibly real. Even if we are our own enemies, we are not our own worst enemies. So it is mischievous to suggest that we can proceed without internal action *and* external action, without sorrow *and* strategy. Our sorrow must not damage our confidence (which is not to be mistaken, incidentally, for the clinical euphoria of Donald Rumsfeld) and our strategy must not damage our conscience. But to hold oneself superior to politics, now? How September 10!

WHERE THERE IS EVIL, THERE IS theodicy, and the theodicies of September 11 abound. When I called a friend in Brooklyn to console him for the murder of his son at the World Trade Center, he assured me of his trust in the Lord of the Universe. Such a spectacular death, he explained, must have been an element in a divine plan. I can still hear the calm in his rough voice, the beautiful sound of grief conquered by faith, and I still cannot be certain if it filled me with horror or with envy. But there are secular theodicies, too. There is the belief, for example, that loss is an improving influence, that September 11 made America a deeper and better society. Robert Putnam has exulted that we are finally "bowling together." The men and the women at Liberty Plaza did not die in vain. They died in the cause of "restoring civic engagement in America." "September's tragedy," for this reason, is "a window of opportunity." For Theda Skocpol, there is "a silver lining in the dark clouds that billowed from the Twin Towers and the Pentagon." She hails "new attitudes of social solidarity and trust in government," though she worries that these developments may be "only ripples on the managerial routines of contemporary U.S. civic life." All this is a way of evaluating September 11 for its utility to a particular worldview. Why is the secular and liberal exploitation of tragedy more honorable than the religious and conservative exploitation of tragedy? We have learned a great deal about the people who died on September 11, and they do not appear to have bowled alone. And if they were alienated, they were alive. Oh, for those big mad buildings to be soaring still over a sea of anomie.

LEON WIESELTIER

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Professionalizing Teachers versus Improving the Profession

Chester E. Finn Jr. is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, chairman of Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education, and president of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

When the National Commission on Excellence in Education unleashed its blockbuster report, *A Nation at Risk*, in 1983, teaching was one of its foremost concerns. Slipshod preparation, shortages in key fields, and the inability to attract academically able people were just a few of the issues raised by the report. The commission made several recommendations to address these concerns, including higher teacher standards, performance-based pay, and alternative certification. Yet twenty years later, **what started as an effort to improve the teaching profession has turned instead into professionalizing teacher improvement**, with little to show in the way of improved school performance.

A Nation at Risk viewed teachers as crucial workers in an underperforming industry—U.S. schools. Almost before the ink was dry, however, Americans were presented with another view from a different report, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*. This report said that teachers should *shape* school improvement, not merely be its instruments, and also shifted from the view that teachers should impart knowledge and skills to their students to the view that they should help children "learn how to learn."

A Nation Prepared was sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation, which had powerful allies with great staying power, political clout, and deep pockets. As a result, its teacher professionalization recommendations have gained more traction than the reform strategies policies urged in *A Nation at Risk*.

Among these professionalizing legacies is an alphabet soup of new groups such as the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) that dictate how teachers are trained, licensed, and deployed. Nearly every state now has a partnership with NCATE, giving it power to shape and approve certification programs. Half the states and many districts offer salary increases per the recommendations of the NBPTS. And sixteen states have created "professional" teacher standards boards that are insulated from the influence of elected officials and taxpayers.

For all the political and budgetary resources that have gone into professionalizing teaching, however, we have seen few results in the classroom. Pupil performance today is no better than it was twenty years ago. Professionalization has also crippled other worthy education reforms, especially those based on choice and standards.

Resistance to results-free professionalism may be growing. Alternative certification programs, charter schools, and programs such as Teach for America are proving to be popular, effective, and free of the union-dominated cartel arrangements from which the professionalizers draw strength. Skeptics are proliferating, too, now including U.S. education secretary Rod Paige, whose 2002 report on teacher quality explained that raising teacher standards is only part of the solution; states must also tear down the wall that keeps many talented individuals out of the profession.

Such talk alarms the professionalizers, who have grown accustomed to friends (and funds) in Washington. The funny thing is, Secretary Paige's advice is similar to that provided by the National Commission back in 1983. Maybe this time we will heed it and focus on boosting teachers' effectiveness instead of endlessly professionalizing them.

— Chester E. Finn Jr.

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

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